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MEMOIRS

OF THE

COUNTESS DE GENLIS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

THE HISTORY OF THE

EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

VOL. I.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

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PREFACE.

THAT every author ought to be responsible for his work, is an incontestable truth; and it is universally acknowledged, that there is something cowardly in the publication of a work at once anonymous and personal; for however well founded may be the censure it contains, the author can only obtain a right to employ it, and consequently on opportunity of benefiting his readers by its use, by the avowal of his name. It is impossible that there should not be many remarks, often of a very piquant kind, in a work which contains an infinite number of private anecdotes, and a narrative of the successive events which have occurred during more than half a century. To leave memoirs behind, which the

writer fears to publish during his life-time, is an act which throws a suspicion over their veracity, and is as it were, a profanation of the sacred and inaccessible asylum of the tomb. That last refuge of oppressed innocence ought not to be the hiding-place of those pusillanimous writers, be they who they may, who dare not publish their history to the world, till they are enveloped in its dark bosom. The sepulchral stone is mute; and since it cannot be interrogated, it ought but to echo its touching reply to the vows of religion and the regrets of friendship. The authenticity of memoirs (especially in days of trouble and of faction) is never incontestable in the eyes of the world, but when the author permits his contemporary narratives to appear during his life-time; for even if posthumous writings are perfectly accurate and faithful, the public may always believe they are falsified

The efforts of malevolence have never succeeded in fixing upon any of my works a single falsehood, or a single erroneous citation; yet these works contain many severe remarks. I have never however allowed myself to employ such severity, but for the

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interest of religion and morals,* and I have constantly praised every one frankly, (even my enemies,) when they have been blameless in these particulars; the same honesty and impartiality will be traced throughout these memoirs, which will be useful, because they are true, and because neither malignity nor resentment have dictated a single line in them.

It is with regret that I have been compelled in these memoirs to mention a part of the behaviour of the late Madame de Montesson, my aunt, towards me; I say *a part*, for I have been careful to avoid entering into all the details which I might have given on the subject; the omission of my own justification would have cost me no regret; but it was impossible for me to sacrifice that of my mother and brother, who, as will be seen throughout the work, are constantly implicated in the narrative.†

* Though the late M. Suard has asserted in one of his printed works, that my *only eminent talent was my severity*. If this is the case, I can boast that I have not abused my *only talent*.

† As well as an unfortunate prince, who has since sullied his fame by an action at once horrible and inexcusable, but who, at the period to which I allude, had discovered only sentiments the most humane and generous; and who, as I shall prove, had conducted himself towards Madame de Montesson in the noblest

But even in proving from facts that Madame de Montesson was never *my benefactress*, and that she has never in her life done me a single service, I have always spoken of her without animosity; I have never attacked her character or reputation; I have even justified her from a calumnious report generally believed; I have done justice to her good qualities; and I have related of her a charming anecdote, which was hitherto unknown.

I may boast of being the first author who has set the useful example of publishing my memoirs during my life-time; and I have some merit in taking such a resolution, because I believed that persons in general would condemn it in the common-place phrases applied with so little discernment, and which yet make so much impression on the unreflecting: I knew that such persons would say, "that it was wrong to place myself so prominently on the scene,"—"that a woman should avoid notoriety," &c. &c.

manner. I have elsewhere said, that "a wish to defame the virtuous, shows a perverted mind; but there is cowardice in calumniating the guilty;" and I shall add here, that "when they are unjustly accused on some points, it is cowardly not to justify them when we can."

An author must be pretty well accustomed to publicity, who has already produced many volumes and who has been engaged for more than half a century in attacking all pernicious doctrines, and consequently the philosophists; so that for a long time past I have been completely impassive to the unjust attacks, satirical remarks, libels, and the dread of prominent publicity. Besides, in an age when the biography of contemporaries is so regularly published, it becomes almost an obligation upon those, who have taken the trouble to write their memoirs, to publish them, in order to correct multitudes of errors and involuntary calumnies.*

* For example, some one has thought proper unknown to me, and without consulting my family, to place in three biographical works an *abridgement of my life*. Among other mistakes, the editor seems to be ignorant, that before my marriage I was a canoness; that I never bore the name he gives me, at the time he alludes to; and he states that M. de Genlis married me *on account of my great literary reputation*. I was then seventeen, and certainly I did not myself foresee that I should one day have the courage to become an author. It is also stated that the late Madame de Montesson was aunt of Madame de Genlis, whereas she was my mother's sister. From these instances, may be gathered the value of such contemporary histories.

MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME DE GENLIS.

Most of my cotemporaries have left behind them memoirs of the history of their lives, or at least of a long series of years. I have read all these memoirs: they refer to the time in which I have lived; they treat of events which have taken place under my own eyes, and of which I had myself collected the details in a private journal to which I added something daily during the fifteen consecutive years which I passed in the very highest circles.* All the memoirs

* In quitting France, I entrusted my journals to my daughter, who having been shut up in prison was unable to attend to their preservation. These MSS. which were all in my own handwriting, have been lost, with many others which I could not carry with me: but their contents are completely impressed on my memory, for besides having consigned them to paper, I have often

which have been published up to the present year (1812) contain a vast number of scandalous anecdotes. I have constantly abstained from collecting these; and I shall be able throughout this work to refute many of them, and without any suspicion of partiality, for they are foreign to myself, and often

read them over to my friends. I have preserved only four volumes of these journals, and have lost three of them. One volume, written at the Palais Royal, contained throughout little more than the details of the vexations which Madame du N.... made me undergo—of whom I shall say nothing farther, both because her adventures have since become so notorious, and because she herself has been imprisoned for the rest of her life. I knew her history perfectly when I wrote the history of what I had suffered through her; yet I solemnly protest, that throughout this very volume, I had not said a single word against her reputation or her conduct. This volume is the only one of my journals in which I have spoken much of myself. I do not regret the loss of it; for I should not have made use of its contents in these memoirs.

The second volume, which has been lost, formed a part of my second journey into England, undertaken since the revolution. The third contained a methodical, detailed, and luminous account of all the manufactories I have seen during twenty-five years, throughout France and in my travels, with reflections on the improvements in the sciences and the mechanical arts, and on the amelioration of the condition of apprentices. I regret this volume much; it might have been useful, and was the fruit of a great many journeys, much expense, and long study, which last, by the way, has enabled me to have the pleasure of rectifying many errors and oversights in the Encyclopédie. To this volume was added a MS. in sheets, entitled *A Critical Enquiry* (on the same subject) which is also lost. *(Note by the Author.)*

fall upon individuals who have been my personal enemies. The desire of performing this act of justice has strongly contributed to inspire me with the idea of publishing these memoirs. Besides I have known almost all the literary men of the present century, and my youth has been passed during the maturity and the old age of those belonging to the last. I have thus persuaded myself that I should leave notices, (which will be good, because they will be true,) of the literature of more than half a century. I thought also, that having spent a great part of my life at court, and in the great world, I could give a faithful picture of a state of society now broken up or extinct; and of a century not only passed away, but absolutely effaced from the minds of the existing generation. I conceived, in the third place, that my own literary life was not entirely destitute of interest; and that it would be somewhat curious to see how a person, who has always loved solitude, tranquillity, and the elegant arts, and whose character was naturally mild, timid, and reserved, could make up her mind to cause so much noise in the world, to figure so much upon the scene, and to engage herself in disputes without end.

If I were conscious in my heart of the slightest resentment—of any rancour against the persons of whom I am to speak, I would give up this work, lest there should creep into it, in spite of myself, some

trait of bitterness or spleen: but I can protest, with the most scrupulous regard to truth, that there exists not in my breast a single malevolent feeling towards any human being, and that throughout my life, I would never have refused to render a service, even in secret, to the worst of my enemies, had I possessed the opportunity of doing so. At sixty-six, when we have suffered much, and are worn out with many fatigues, we see the inevitable darkness of the tomb approaching so near us, that there needs no great effort of imagination to fancy ourselves already enveloped in its gloom! There all mortal illusions disappear, all our little vanities sink to their true value, all our enmities cease....... From the depths of the grave a single cry has arisen since the beginning of the world; it implores for mercy! The Sovereign Judge replies to the cry but in these words, "Hast *thou* forgiven?"...... "Yes, O Lord! I have pardoned without reserve, and from the depth of that soul which thou hast created but to know and to love thee; of that soul formed for a love so sublime, and which every sentiment of hatred sullies and perverts....... I *have* pardoned, I take thee alone to witness; deign then to guide my pen, and suffer not a word of bitterness to escape from it; and if I have committed any injustice, recal it to my mind, that I may repair it in this book, and that thou mayest not hereafter lay it to my charge. Let can-

dour and goodness of heart be pre-eminent throughout my work, and let every thing be pure that it may be useful." *

I was born on the 25th of January, 1746, on a little estate in Burgundy, near Autun, called Champcéri, by corruption, it is said, of Champ de Cerès, (the field of Ceres) the original name of the ground. I was born so small and so weakly that they would not venture to put me in swaddling clothes, and a few moments after my birth, I was on the point of losing my life. I had been placed in a down pillow, of which, to keep me warm, the two sides were folded over me, and fastened with a pin; and thus wrapped up, I was laid upon an arm-chair in the room. The judge of the district, who was almost blind, came to pay his visit of compliment to my father: and as, in his country fashion, he separated the huge flaps of his coat to sit down, some one saw that he was going to place himself in the arm-chair where I was; luckily he was prevented from sitting down, and I escaped being crushed to death. I had a nurse who suckled me at the château; she concealed the fact of being four months advanced

* These Memoirs were commenced long before the time mentioned here: I had written a vast number of detached parts at Belle-Chasse: and the third volume, almost entirely, during the emigration. I have since only had to put together and arrange all these fragments. *(Note by the Author.)*

in her pregnancy; and fed me with wine mixed with water, and a little of the crumb of barley-bread passed through a sieve, without giving me a drop of milk of any kind. This singular kind of food, which is called in Burgundy *miaulée,* succeeded with me completely; and with an appearance of delicate health, I acquired an excellent constitution. I experienced in my childhood a series of unfortunate accidents. At eighteen months old, I fell into a pond, out of which I was extricated with great difficulty: at the age of five I had a fall, and received a severe wound on the head; as a great deal of blood flowed from it, it was thought unnecessary to bleed me; but a deposit formed in the head, which burst at the ear after forty days, and contrary to all expectation I was saved. A short time afterwards, I fell into the kitchen fire: this accident did not injure my face, but there are to this day two marks of it on my body. Thus often was endangered, in its earliest years, that life which was afterwards to prove so chequered!

My education has been so singular, that I cannot help giving some account of it here. My father sold the estate of Champcéri when I was two years old. He had a house at Cosne, to which he removed, and passed three years there. The recollection of that house, of its superb garden and beautiful terrace upon the Loire, and of the château of Mienne, a league from Cosne, where we went so often, remains

indelibly engraved on my memory. Passing by that road, thirty-five years after, I instantly recognised the château, though I was but five years old when we quitted Cosne. My father purchased the marquisate of St. Aubin, an estate most desirable from its situation, its extent, and its titular and seignorial rights. I have never thought without a feeling of tenderness of this spot, which was once so dear to me, and in which six years of innocence and happiness glided away! Oh, how much sweeter it is to me, as I write, to recal to my mind the walks and the sports of my happy childhood, than the pomp and the splendour of the palaces I have since inhabited! . . . All these courts, once so brilliant, are now faded! all the projects which were then built with so much confidence are become chimeras! The impenetrable future has cheated alike the security of princes and the ambition of courtiers! Versailles is dropping into ruin; the delicious gardens of Chantilly, of Villers-Coterets, of Sceaux, of the Isle-Adam, are destroyed! I should now look in vain for the vestiges of that fragile grandeur which I once admired there: but I should find the banks of the Loire as smiling as ever, the meadows of St. Aubin as full of violets and lilies of the valley; and its woods loftier and fairer! There are no vicissitudes for the eternal beauties of nature; and while amidst blood-stained revolutions,

palaces, marble columns, statues of bronze, and even cities themselves disappear, the simple flower of the fields, regardless of the storm, grows into beauty, and multiplies for ever.

The château of St. Aubin resembled those which Mrs. Radcliffe has since described. It was ancient and ruinous, and had old towers, and immense court-yards, in one of which was a canal (bordered with ebony trees, which were then very rare) filled with fine carp. Though but a step from the Loire, the château was so awkwardly built, that you could not see that beautiful river from any of its windows. I was lodged on the ground floor, in a little damp room which opened upon a terrace, at the bottom of which there was a large pond.* My mother inhabited the other side of the building; I was separated from her by a room where my gouvernante slept, and by a vast saloon. The rooms on the first floor were appropriated to strangers. The nearest town to us was Bourbon Lancy, two leagues from St. Aubin; my

* The little tower where I slept is all that has been preserved of the ancient building. The inhabitants of that part of the country remembered that that tower was my chamber in my childhood; and with a feeling which was most touching to me, would not suffer it to be pulled down. This fact I learned from the Marquis of Aligre, now the proprietor of the estate of St. Aubin.—*(Note by the Author.)*

father was lord of the manor. There were mineral and hot baths in the town, which were at that time a good deal frequented; we were six leagues from Moulins, and twelve from Autun.

In going from the château, you found yourself on the banks of the Loire, and on the opposite shore, facing the château, was the famous abbey of Sept-Fonts, of which also my father was *seigneur*, a circumstance which produced an intimate connexion between my father and the religious persons of that order. We sometimes went to dine at the abbey, where there was always an apartment allotted to visiters. It was one of my greatest pleasures to cross the Loire in a boat, to go and dine at Sept-Fonts. Besides, I had such a veneration for these holy men, that I was never tired of gazing upon those who came to sit with us: I knew that in their abbey a perpetual silence was observed, and it seemed to me as curious to hear them speak, as to hear articulate sounds from the lips of a person born dumb. When we were once fixed at St. Aubin, my education began to be attended to. Mademoiselle Urgon, the village schoolmistress, taught me to read. Having an excellent memory, I learnt with great facility; and at the end of six or seven months, I read with ease. I was brought up with a brother fifteen months younger than myself, of whom I was exceedingly fond: with the exception of the hour set apart for

reading, we were allowed to play together all day long. We passed part of the day in the court-yards or in the garden, and in the evening we played in the drawing-room. My father, finding our games too noisy, bethought him of making us play at the fathers of Sept-Fonts, in place of *Madame*. This delighted us extremely; and we substituted for our cries and our noisy dialogue, signs, gestures, and the most peaceable pantomime; and the silence which would have been vainly imposed upon us in any other way, was thus observed with equal pleasure and attention.

I was six years old when my brother was sent to Paris, to the famous academy of M. Bertrand, *(Pension du Roule,)* the most virtuous and best instructor of his time. It was he who invented the method of learning to read and spell in six weeks, by means of boxes full of counters. Two or three months after the departure of my brother, my mother made a journey to Paris, and took me along with her. I had an aunt at Paris, young and beautiful, called the Countess of Bellevau, of whom I shall speak at greater length hereafter. Madame de Bellevau had with her two children, whom one of our relations, M. Ducrest de Chigi, had, upon his marriage, recognised as his daughters; they bore consequently the name of Ducrest, and no one could juridically contest their right to it. They styled Madame de

Bellevau their aunt. I was not excessively delighted with Paris, and for the first few days of my stay there, I regretted St. Aubin bitterly. I had two teeth pulled out; I had whalebone stays which pinched me terribly; my feet were imprisoned in tight shoes, with which it was impossible for me to walk; I had three or four thousand curl-papers put on my head; and I wore, for the first time in my life, a hoop. In order to get rid of my country attitudes, I had an iron collar put on my neck, and as I squinted a little at times, I was obliged to put on goggles as soon as I woke in the morning, and these I wore four hours.* I was, moreover, not a little surprised, when they talked of giving me a master to teach me what I thought I knew well enough already—to *walk*. Besides all this, I was forbidden to run, to leap, or to ask questions. All these painful constraints made such an impression on me, that I have never forgotten them, and have since faithfully depicted them in the little comedy published in my *Theatre of Education*, called *The Dove*. But a great ceremony, and the fine entertainments which followed it, soon made me forget my little griefs. I had only been privately christened; I was now baptized in public: Madame de Bellevau was my godmother, and M. Bouret, the farmer-

* An excellent remedy for that bad habit, and which removed it in my case entirely in three months. To be sure, mine was not an habitual squint.—(*Note by the Author.*)

general, my godfather.* I received some splendid presents; and I had, besides, plenty of sweetmeats and playthings; and I soon recovered my good humour. I was taken to tae Opera, which delighted me beyond measure. I shall never forget the opera which I then saw performed: it was *Roland le furieux;* and the famous *Chassé,* then very old, played Roland. Chassé made me tremble, as he tore up by the roots the trees of the side-scenes. It is singular, that at a period when nobility was so highly valued, this actor should have been ennobled *on account of his voice and his fine singing.* The following epigram was made on the subject:

Dans la pastorale d'Issé
Avez-vous entendu Chassé?
Ce n'est plus cette voix tonnante,
Ce ne sont plus ces grands éclats,
C'est un gentilhomme qui chante
Et qui ne se fatigue pas.†

* A financier, famous for his riches and prodigality. It was Bouret who built the superb pavilion of Croix-Fontaine, simply to receive Louis XV. when he went to hunt in that neighbourhood. The king used to go there to repose from the fatigues of the chase, and found a magnificent collation always ready.

Bouret died in 1778, so poor, that he could not obtain the loan of fifty louis, of which he stood in need: and yet this splendid financier once possessed six hundred thousand francs a year. (£24,000.)—*(Note by the Editor.)*

† Claude Louis Dominique Le Chassé made his first appearance on the stage, in August 1721. He retired in 1757, with the repu-

We went to pass a portion of the summer in a delightful house at Etioles, belonging to M. Le Normand, contractor for the *Postes*, and the husband of Madame de Pompadour, who was long before this time, the declared favourite. Of all the personages I saw there, one only struck me; and of him I have preserved such a strong recollection, that I can picture to myself all his gestures, his walk, his air, and the expression of his smile. It was the Marshal de Loewendal.* I had heard him called a

tation of being the best actor, and bass singer, at the Opera, and an honest man. His talents were rewarded by a patent of nobility, and he took the title of Esquire and Seigneur du Ponceau. He died at Paris in 1786, at the age of eighty-eight.

The epigram quoted by Madame de Genlis, proves that in 1752 a vehement style of singing and loud notes were held in high esteem. The opera still preserves the same taste, but that of the audience is wonderfully changed: the singers now preferred are by no means those who have the loudest voices, and make the most noise.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

It is impossible to translate this epigram into English, and, at the same time, to preserve its point.—(*Note by the Translator.*)

* The Count de Loewendal, great grandson of Frederick III. king of Denmark, was born in 1700, and was but fifty-two years old at the time alluded to by Madame de Genlis. Loewendal entered the army at thirteen, and served in 1713 as a private soldier; but in the course of a year he advanced from rank to rank, and at last was made a captain. He entered the service of France in 1745; he was then lieutenant-general. The sieges of Menin, Ypres, Furnes, Fribourg, Ghent, Oudenarde, Ostend, Neupont, Sas-de-

hero; and I was made to understand what the word hero meant: at that time every one sung the famous song composed about him, so clever of its kind:

S'ti-là qui pincit Berg-op-Zoom
Est un vrai moule à *Te Deum*, &c.

I looked upon this *hero* with a mingled feeling of awe and admiration. This first impression was so strong in me, that my features expressed my feelings with all the candour of my age; the Marshal was delighted with this, paid me a great deal of attention, and took me often on his knee; and with this I was infinitely more pleased than with all that other persons could do for me.

I had changed my hoop on my arrival at Etioles for what was called a Savoyard habit: it consisted of a little vest of brown taffeta, with a short petticoat of the same, trimmed with three or four rows of rose-coloured ribbon, sewed on plain, and my head-dress was a gauze handkerchief tied under the chin. I found here once more a fine garden; I was allowed to gather flowers; I dined at the same table with my *hero;* then, I ran about all day under the trees in the

Gand, and Bergen-op-Zoom, as well as his share in the victory of Fontenoy, gave him a great and well-merited celebrity.—*(Note by the Editor.)*

garden, and at night I supped with the eldest of my cousins, who was then but four years old. This kind of life appeared to me delicious. About the time of our departure, there was a grand fête given to the master of the house, in which I performed the allegorical part of *Friendship*. I had a pretty dress, and sung with great applause some bad verses, which I have not yet forgotten, so delighted was I with the glory of that day. After this trip, my mother, my aunt, my cousin, and myself, departed together in an immense berline for Lyons, where my cousin and I were to be received as canonesses of the noble Chapter of Alix. As it was indispensable that the counts of Lyons should examine into the proofs of nobility of the candidates, we were detained about a fortnight there. Our proofs being found satisfactory, we departed for Alix, which is but a few leagues from Lyons. The chapter formed with its immense buildings a singular appearance. It was composed of a great number of pretty little houses, all alike, and each having a little garden. These houses were so arranged, that they formed a half circle, of which the palace of the abbess occupied the centre. I was highly amused at Alix: the abbess and all the ladies loaded me with caresses and sugar-plums, which gave me a great taste for the vocation of canoness. Nevertheless my happiness was somewhat troubled, by the dread of a ferocious animal of an unknown species which then

ravaged the department, and of which such horrible stories were related, that none of our ladies durst venture to leave the house for a walk in the country. The government ordered public hunting parties for its destruction; and a few days after we left Alix this terrible animal was slain. Fifteen years after I witnessed the renewal of a like scourge. Every one has heard of the hyena of Gévaudan, which committed such fearful ravages.

The day of my reception was a great day to me. The evening which preceded it was by no means so agreeable: I had my hair dressed, my clothes tried on, I was catechised, &c. At last the happy moment arrived; my cousin and I were dressed in white, and conducted in pomp to the church of the chapter. All the ladies, dressed in the fashion of the day, but wearing black satin robes over their hoops, and large cloaks lined with ermine, were in the choir. A priest who officiated as Grand Prior, catechised us, made us repeat the creed, and afterwards kneel upon velvet cushions. His duty was next to cut out a small lock of our hair; but being very old and nearly blind, he cut my ear a little, but I supported the pain *heroically*, and the accident was only discovered by the bleeding of the ear. After this, he put on my finger a consecrated gold ring, and fastened on my head a piece of black and white stuff, about the length of one's finger, which the canonesses called

un mari (a husband.) I was then decorated with the signs of the order, a red ribbon with a beautiful enamelled cross, and a broad girdle of black-watered ribbon. After the ceremony he delivered a short exhortation; we then went and saluted all the canonesses before leaving the church; and afterwards we heard high mass. The remainder of the day after dinner, excepting the hour of church service, was spent in entertainments, in visits which we paid to all the ladies, and in amusing little games. From this time I was called Madame la Comtesse de Lancy;* my father being, as I have already said, lord of the manor of Bourbon-*Lancy*, was the cause of my receiving that name. The pleasure I had in hearing myself called *Madame* surpassed every other. In this chapter every one had the choice of taking the vows or not at the age prescribed or later: but those who did not take them gained nothing by their reception into the order but the title of *lady* and *countess*, and the right of wearing its decorations. Those ladies who took the vows, got in time considerable prebends: those who did not, were not obliged to reside in the chapter; but those who did, were not only prevented from marrying, but com-

* All the canonesses of Alix had a right to bear the title of countess: and I bore the name of *Lancy* until my marriage.—(*Note by the Author.*)

pelled to reside in the chapter two years out of every three, passing the year of liberty, however, where they chose. There was in this chapter, as in several others, a sort of adoption formally recognised by the statutes. Every canoness who had taken the vows had a right to adopt for her niece a young canoness not of the chapter, on condition that the young person on coming of age should take the vows, and that in the mean time she should live constantly with her adoptive aunt. The latter might in this case bequeath to her niece her jewels, her furniture, her house, and her prebend. The Countess of Clugny, one of our relations, and a canoness of the chapter, offered to adopt me. She was rich, and urged my mother strongly to consent to the adoption: my life would doubtless have been far more tranquil had that consent been obtained.

We quitted Alix after a stay of six weeks; I wept bitterly in parting with these amiable canonesses: my attachments were at that time strongly and easily formed. At Lyons we separated from my aunt and my cousin, who returned to Paris, while we took the road to Burgundy. On our arrival we found our home a house of mourning: my mother had given birth to a son the year before, whom my father caused to be received as a knight of Malta from his cradle; a circumstance which was always in the end eminently

advantageous in taking the vows, and performing the campaigns required by the order.* It was thus that the fathers of these days disposed of the destiny of their children—and it must be allowed, with somewhat of indifference. The poor infant had just died, at eighteen months old! I had a sister who died in the same way in infancy. I have ever since regretted her; what a friend is a sister! I am sure I should have passionately loved mine.

I was now seven years old, and, with a fine voice, I discovered much taste for music. My mother had made arrangements at Paris for bringing out of Lower Brittany a young woman, the daughter of the organist of Vannes, an excellent musician, who played admirably on the harpsichord. We found at Saint Aubin a good instrument, an old *Rucker* from Moulins, and we looked with the utmost impatience for the arrival of Mademoiselle de Mars, which was the name of the young musician. At last she came, to my great satisfaction: without being what could be called pretty, she had fine eyes, expressive features, great mildness of manner, and a sober and even grave air, though she was but sixteen. I became attached

* The words of the original are "faire des Caravanes:" a phrase which the academy explains thus: "The word *Caravanes* signifies the cruises which the Knights of Malta are obliged to make at sea, to acquit themselves of the service due to their order."—(*Note by the Translator.*)

to her from the first, and my attachment was as lasting as lively. She was charged to instruct and to direct me in every thing: I was given up entirely to her guidance, and, in spite of her youth, I am convinced it would have been impossible to have placed me in better hands.

Though Mademoiselle de Mars had nothing of what may be called *profane* knowledge, she had a great deal of natural *tact*, and, with a character of great mildness and solidity, she had a generous and feeling heart, and a sincere sense of religion.

My mother was so much occupied with her household affairs and the visits of her neighbours, that she had no time to attend to me: and all I had learnt up to this time was a little of my catechism, which had been taught me by the chambermaids among whom I lived, and who had among other matters filled my brain with a thousand stories about ghosts. In other respects they were excellent girls, and never gave me a single bad example. I soon exchanged their society entirely for that of Mademoiselle de Mars, which was infinitely preferable. I never saw my father and mother but for an instant in the morning, and at the hours of breakfast and dinner. After dinner I remained an hour in the room; and passed the rest of the day in my chamber with Mademoiselle de Mars, or in taking a walk accompanied by her only. My father, who had a fine pack of hounds, was often at

the chase: he amused us from time to time with a *pipée* (catching birds with a bird-call). We also went sometimes to fish on the Loire. Sometimes I was allowed to go to the night fishing; and the sight of the fish attracted to the boats by the blaze of bunches of burning straw, appeared to me quite wonderful. My father had received from nature gifts rarely found together: his face was singularly handsome, his figure tall and elegant; he had a great deal of talent and information, and had made a considerable figure as a scholar at the Jesuits' College, as well as his elder brother, who died before I was born: the latter left to the college by his will a fine cabinet of medals. My father had some knowledge of coins, but he had chiefly addicted himself to the study of chemistry and natural philosophy; he had at Saint Aubin a cabinet of philosophical instruments; and I have seen him, when I was an infant, make many experiments on electricity and the air-pump. He joined to all his acquirements a singular mildness of character, a cultivated taste, and a feeling and generous heart; he loved and understood music, and played tolerably on the French horn and the violin. He had entered into the army when very young, and had greatly distinguished himself. A singular circumstance occasioned his quitting the service three years before his marriage. He was a captain in the regiment of the Duke of Hostun, who was exceedingly

attached to him: he was in garrison with his regiment in a country town, when a love affair which he had at Paris induced him to go thither secretly for three days without leave: he feigned illness, went to bed, and left a servant who was to second his stratagem; and under an assumed name, he set off at midnight on horseback and arrived at Paris. The next night, passing by the Louvre, he was attacked by three men; my father drew his sword, placed his back to the wall, killed one of the assassins, wounded another mortally, and put the third to flight. In the mean time a crowd collected, the guard came up, and my father was arrested and taken to the house of the commissary, whither also they carried one of the assassins who was still living. It was admitted by this wretch that my father did what he had done in defending his life against three robbers: but unfortunately it was necessary that my father should tell his name, and by so doing it would be seen that he was at Paris without leave. My father desired to be taken to the house of the Duke of Hostun, who was luckily at Paris; he reckoned upon his friendship, and was not disappointed. The duke arranged the affair; but he refused to allow my father to remain longer in Paris. He was compelled to return immediately to his garrison; and this annoyed him so much, that he resolved to quit the service; and in fact he did so three months after, at the age of thirty-two.

My father had the utmost affection for me; but he did not interfere with my education in any point but one: he wished to make me a woman of firm mind, and I was born with numberless little antipathies: I had a horror of all insects, particularly of spiders and frogs; I was also afraid of mice, and he made me feed and bring up one. I loved my father to excess, and he had such an influence over me, that I never durst hesitate about obeying him. He would frequently oblige me to catch spiders with my fingers, and to hold toads in my hands; and, at such times, though I felt as if the blood had forsaken my veins, I was forced to obey. These trials of my courage proved to me clearly that toads are not venomous; but they powerfully contributed to weaken my nerves, and have only augmented the antipathies which they were intended to remove. They have, however, served to give me a habit of self-command, which of itself is a great benefit. In other respects, Mademoiselle de Mars alone had the direction of my studies; she made me repeat my catechism, an abridgment of the History of Father Buffier, and gave me daily a lesson of singing, and two on the harpsichord. In giving these last, she very properly insisted that I should look attentively at the book, in order to learn to decypher the notes; but I had found out a means of saving myself this trouble. I pretended to be excessively charmed with the piece I was to learn,

and under this pretext, I made Mademoiselle de Mars play it over and over again for two or three days. By that time I had it by heart, and my memory and ear were sufficiently good to enable me to play it to the great satisfaction of my teacher, who was highly flattered by the astonishing progress I was making in music; while all the time I had my eyes fixed on the book without looking at the notes, and was playing entirely by rote. As for Father Buffier, he was so very tiresome, that he was abandoned for ever at the end of eight days, and no one asked us any questions about the matter. At the request of Mademoiselle de Mars, my father gave us, out of his library, the *Clelia* of Mademoiselle de Scudéry, and the *Theatre* of Mademoiselle Barbier:* these two books were our delight for a long time; and from thence, at eight years old, I began to compose romances and comedies, which I dictated to Mademoiselle de Mars, for I did not yet know how to form a single letter. We had the printed words

* Mary Anne Barbier has composed tragedies, comedies, operas, and ballets. She often consulted Pellégrin, which has caused her works to be frequently attributed to the abbé. Her *Saisons Littéraires* are a mixture of poetry, history, and remarks. There is a good deal of facility and flow in her verses; but little elegance, and no vigour. The works of Mademoiselle Barbier have been collected in two volumes 12mo. She died in 1742.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

of three or four operas, and found great pleasure in singing them to *extempore* melodies, which we composed as we sung; this was one of our most favourite amusements. Amidst all this, we occupied our minds seriously with religion: I was born with devotional feelings, and, from my earliest infancy, have regarded the starry firmament not merely with delight, but with a far higher emotion. Mademoiselle de Mars, who had the spirit of an angel, spoke to me often of the Deity, especially in our solitary walks. We had no acquaintance with botany or natural history; but we admired, with feelings of ecstacy, the skies, the trees, and the flowers, as the works of God's hand, and the proofs of his existence; and that idea animated and embellished all nature in our eyes. It was not a learned instructress, who loaded me with grave lessons, but a young girl of seventeen, full of candour, innocence, and piety, who confided to me all her thoughts, and transferred to my breast all the sentiments of her own; and in this respect no education could have been better than mine. Every day after dinner, we quitted the dining-room, and in our own rooms, repeated the service for the Holy Virgin; and this was to us so true a pleasure, that we experienced the sincerest regret when any thing occurred to prevent our performance of the pious duty. About this time I used often, on awaking in the night, to get out of my bed,

and prostrate myself on the floor in prayer to the Deity.

I was as happy as a child can be; though exceedingly inattentive, I was never scolded, nor did I ever hear of punishment. I knew seven or eight pieces of music for the harpsichord, which I played tolerably; I had a fine voice, and could sing three or four cantatas of Clérambout, to the delight of my parents and the admiration of our neighbours. Mademoiselle de Mars taught me but little; but her conversation formed my understanding and my heart, and in every thing she set me the example of modesty, gentleness, and goodness. I loved and admired her so much, and dreaded so much to displease her, that she might have taught me application, if she had so chosen; but about this she was not very anxious;—content with my disposition, she was disposed to be content with every thing else, and was unwilling to adopt in my education any kind of constraint. From this time, I acquired a taste for the instruction of children, and constituted myself schoolmistress in a whimsical manner. I had a little room beside that of Mademoiselle de Mars, whose chamber had a small door which communicated with the drawing-room; mine opened only into hers; but my window, in front of the château, was not quite five feet from the ground; below the window was a large terrace covered with sand, with a wall breast high, but of

great depth on the outside, and extending along a pond, which was only separated from the wall by a narrow road covered with rushes and grass.

The little boys of the village used to come to this spot to play and gather rushes; I liked to look on as they played, and soon took it into my head to give them lessons, that is to say, to teach them all I knew myself—my catechism, some lines out of Mademoiselle Barbier's tragedies, and what I had by heart of the principles of music. Leaning against the wall of the terrace, I gave them these excellent lessons in the gravest possible manner. I had great difficulty in making them learn to repeat verses, on account of their Burgundy accent, *(patois,)* but I was patient, and they were docile. My little scholars, ranged along the wall, amidst reeds and rushes, looked up and listened to me with the profoundest attention, for I promised them *rewards*, which consisted in fruits, sweetmeats, and all sorts of trifles. I went almost every day to my school, getting out of my room by the window, to which I fastened a cord, by means of which I let myself slide down upon the terrace; I was light and active, and I never had a fall. After my school hours, I came round by one of the courts, and entered my chamber by the dining-room, without being observed. I always selected for these frolics the post-days, while Mademoiselle de Mars was writing to her relations, on which occasions she used

to be so entirely absorbed in her despatches, that she did not pay the least attention to what was passing around her; so that I kept my school very peaceably for a long time, and besides, I came back always at an hour when my mother was not in the drawing-room. At last Mademoiselle de Mars caught me one day in the midst of my school, but she gave me no reprimand: however, she laughed so much at the style in which my scholars declaimed the verses of Mademoiselle Barbier, that she disgusted me with my learned functions.

The first real and profound grief I suffered was on the departure of my father, who went to Paris, assuring us that he would return in six months. I loved my father, as I have always loved my friends, with a strength and devotion of which few hearts are capable. Grief for his departure affected my health, and my grief was no otherwise allayed by time, than as it gave me the hope of soon seeing him again. At the end of three months, my mother resolved on preparing a *fête* for his return. She had a great natural talent for poetry; and though not very well acquainted with its rules, has written some very charming verses. She composed a kind of comic opera, in the pastoral style, with a mythological prologue, in which I played Love. All the chambermaids, and my mother had four, all young and pretty, had parts to perform: besides this, there was to be a tragedy, and Iphi-

genia in Aulis was fixed upon: my mother played Clytemnestra, and I, Iphigenia. A physician of Bourbon-Lancy, called Doctor Pinot, took the part of Agamemnon; his eldest son, a youth of eighteen, was prodigiously applauded as the fiery Achilles, and he was, in truth, fiery enough. His theatric genius had conceived all the contortions, the convulsions, the stampings of the foot, and the terrific cries, which have since been so much applauded on the Parisian stage; I hid myself in order to laugh, for, even at that age, false emphasis and all forced emotions appeared to me exceedingly ridiculous. Mademoiselle de Mars thought as I did, and we amused ourselves secretly in our own room, with imitating this great actor, whom we durst not ridicule at the rehearsals. My mother, to furnish our costume, sacrificed her handsomest dresses. I still recollect, that, in the prologue, my dress was rose colour, under point lace, ornamented with little artificial flowers of all colours; it reached only to my knee, and I had little boots, straw colour and silver, my long hair flowing, and azure wings. My dress, as Iphigenia, over a large hoop, was of China silk, cherry colour and silver, trimmed with sables. As my mother had no diamonds, she ordered from Moulins a prodigious quantity of false stones, to complete our magnificent dresses. In the prologue, there was a passage which pleased me mightily, and of which the idea was

certainly original. I represented Love, as I have said before; a little boy of the village was Pleasure; and I sung a couplet, in which I was supposed to address myself to my father, which ended with—

> **Au Plaisir j'arrache les ailes**
> **Pour le mieux fixer près de vous.**

As I finished, I was to run to little Pleasure, and to pluck off his wings; but it happened one day, at a grand dress-rehearsal, that his wings, being too firmly fastened, resisted: I shook Pleasure in vain—his wings refused to yield; I fell furiously upon Pleasure, and threw him down; he cried piteously, but I never quitted my hold, until I succeeded in plucking off the wings of *displeased* Pleasure, who roared with vexation.

We had many dress-rehearsals, in the presence of a great number of spectators; this lasted three months, during which time the theatre was put in order. Then we played another tragedy, *Zaïre*, whose part was assigned to me; Mademoiselle de Mars played Fatima. I had so natural an ear for verse, that I corrected those who marred its harmony. We played also the *Folies Amoureuses*, of Regnard; I performing Agathe. We called these performances rehearsals, but they were, in fact, real representations; immense crowds came to see them from Bourbon-Lancy and Moulins; and these continual

fêtes must have been given at great expense. My dress, as Love, was found to become me so well, that I wore it regularly. I had several made on the same pattern; I had one dress for the week-days, and another for Sundays. On the latter, when I went to church, the wings were omitted, and I wore a taffeta cloak, of a deep red colour, which covered me from head to foot. But I went daily to walk in the country, wearing all the attributes of Love, a quiver on my back, and a bow in my hand. At home, my mother and all her friends in the neighbourhood, never after gave me any other name than *Love*. Such was my costume, and such were my occupations, for more than nine months. I have described this odd kind of education in the history of the Countess of Rosmond, in the *Rival Mothers*, and I have nowhere in the romance exaggerated its singularity; for, in my own, there was an inconceivable mixture of pious and profane matters; for example, I always followed the processions of the Fête Dieu, dressed as *an angel*. At that time people reasoned very little, and did a great many whimsical things with the most unconscious simplicity, especially in the country, where the *bonhommie* of the neighbourhood of the *Châteaux* was carried to its height. There has always been gossiping and scandal in small towns; but there was, at that time, none of it among the persons who lived near the great houses—

a proof that the more you live privately and *en famille*, the less you are tempted to be calumnious and meddling.

I dwell upon these little peculiarities, because they have had a powerful influence on the rest of my existence: the impressions received in childhood, when they are lively, are never to be erased. My singular education produced on my imagination and my disposition a mixture of the religious and the romantic, of which, perhaps, too many traces will be found in most of my writings.

The excessive applauses which were bestowed on my performances, both in tragedy and comedy, did not intoxicate me. Mademoiselle de Mars, without attempting to subdue my vanity by moral reflections, attached in reality so little importance to successes of this description, that the sense of this alone was sufficient to prevent these praises from rendering me proud. Without the least affectation, she praised me only for what belonged to the heart and the character, or rather, at such times, she caressed me, and seemed to love me more; this made a great impression upon me—others' praises none. With regard to my singular costume, at first, indeed, she laughed a little, but I maintained, without any unbecoming warmth, that it was a very convenient dress: "Oh, very well," said she; and, from that time, she took no further notice of it.

I was not particularly delighted with the nonsense

which was repeated to me on my wearing the dress of Love; those who loaded me most with flatteries on the subject were precisely the persons whom I thought the most tiresome and ridiculous among our acquaintance, so that I was in no danger from their eulogies. What pleased me the most with my dress was its singularity, as I have always had a taste for whatever is uncommon. One of my greatest delights, at this time, was to build castles in the air; I figured for myself a destiny, which I not only filled up with extraordinary events, but introduced into it reverses of fortune, and persecutions, and loved to fancy that I should have the courage to resist them. A thousand times I have supposed myself proscribed, calumniated, and a wanderer, forced to conceal myself under feigned names, and to live by the labour of my hands. At the close of these romances, I never failed to fancy that I had triumphed over my enemies; but this part of my history amused me but little—it cooled my imagination, and I concluded it abruptly. These exercises of the intellect, these inventions which accustomed me to familiarize myself with ideas of persecution and misery, have not been useless to me in the end. I must say, to my own praise, (and it is a thing which distinguishes me from all other persons of a romantic fancy,) that I never sought for events, but as a means of displaying the qualities of the soul which I most admired, patience, courage, and

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presence of mind; and it was for this reason that I always placed myself amidst situations of misfortune. Thus there was at the bottom of these reveries of mine a love of glory and virtue which rendered them remarkable, especially in an infant. Besides this, I had a particular aversion to all that makes a sensation in society—to gossipings, scandal, busybodies, &c. I loved peace of mind and solitude, and hated all these little agitations; and no one has ever possessed in a higher degree than myself, throughout my life, the spirit of peace and conciliation.

Mademoiselle de Mars had so much gentleness in her disposition, and attached so little importance to little matters, that she did not make me feel my own defects: and I was unconscious then of any but a little bluntness of manner and a great deal of vivacity. I was docile and naturally complaisant: I had no pride, nor caprice, nor rancour, but I could not brook delay in the performance of any promise made to me; and in such cases I got angry, and would say many impertinent things. Mademoiselle de Mars, though always calm, was nevertheless not free from faults: she was sometimes sullen, and when I happened to have uttered an unbecoming word to her, she was slow in forgiving. But such quarrels were very rare between us; my vivacity and my rudeness were generally confined to the chambermaids, or to one of our neighbours who came often

to the château, and to whom I had conceived a violent aversion. This antipathy was so singular, that I cannot pass it over here. I do not believe in the physiognomical rules of Lavater, but I believe that nature has endowed some individuals with a precious instinct—that of judging the *soul* by the impression produced by the face; and I am certain I possess that instinct. The personage I so hated was a gentleman who was said to belong to the ancient house of Châlons, now long extinct: he styled himself M. de Châlons, and he was then upwards of thirty; though rich, he had always refused to marry, under pretext of being extremely devout; and he had such a reputation for piety, that he almost passed for a saint. His face was rather handsome, but he had a manner of looking at you from the corner of his eye, and by stealth, which first inspired me with an aversion to him. I remarked also that at church he made many pious contortions; and his uplifted eyes, and hands crossed on his breast, were not at all edifying to me. In short, I considered him a hypocrite, and the event proved him one of the most wicked monsters ever heard of; one who had committed many atrocious crimes, which were discovered in the following manner. Encouraged by the reputation he had usurped, he at last counted upon it too far; and heaven suffered him to be so blinded as to commit crimes which were sure to be discovered. Under the

pretext of repairing his household linen, he brought from Autun a pretty young sempstress, whom he had seen in that town; he detained her in his château about six weeks, after which she disappeared. He wrote to her mother that she had run off with a lover, and at the same time he begged her to send him the girl's youngest sister, who was also extremely pretty, as the repairing of his linen, he said, was not yet finished. She was sent to him; in two months she disappeared also, and the monster wrote to the mother that she had followed the example of her sister, and had taken flight as she did. This time however the unfortunate mother, enlightened by her despair, laid her complaint before the judge, who gave orders for a search throughout the house of M. de Châlons. The wretch, who had information of this, took flight, and was never afterwards heard of; but Providence has surely overtaken him, and caused him to perish in his obscure hiding place. An examination of his château took place; marks of blood ill washed out were visible in one of his cabinets, there were deadly poisons found in a cupboard, and in the garden were several skeletons of his last-buried victims! The body of the first of the young girls was recognized by means of a ring of hair, with a motto, which he had left upon her finger! . . . Thus my antipathy for the monster was completely justified by the sequel.

Amidst our rehearsals and our fêtes, an incident sufficiently singular threw our family one evening into the utmost consternation at the château. It was at this time that the famous Mandrin, at the head of his troop, committed so many robberies throughout Burgundy; he professed only to be the enemy of the farmers-general and their dependants; nevertheless, from time to time he levied contributions upon persons who had nothing to do with his professed foes. One evening, some one came to tell us that a considerable troop, wearing uniforms similar to those worn by Mandrin's band, had arrived in the village; that the commander of the troop styled himself colonel, and called himself Marquis of Breteuil,* though there was little doubt that it was Mandrin himself. This account spread alarm throughout the château; my mother was much frightened, and Mademoiselle de Mars still more, and M. Corbier, our steward, did not, on this great occasion, make any brilliant show of valour. My mother sent him into the village to get some information on the subject;

* Mandrin was originally a soldier, then he deserted, became a coiner, next a smuggler, and finally chief of a band of robbers. He had nothing ferocious in his appearance, and his repartees were lively. He was apprehended on the territories of the King of Sardinia, whither he had fled, and was broken on the wheel at Valentia, on the 24th May, 1754.—*(Note by the Editor.)*

he returned in a panic, and told us that the commander and his officers, who were lodging at the village inn, had all most alarming visages; that they were making a hideous riot, and that it was impossible to mistake them for any others than Mandrin and his accomplices. In a few minutes afterwards, we received a message, to announce a visit from this terrible Marquis de Breteuil.* Our terror was at its height: as for myself, I found that curiosity is sometimes stronger than fear, for I had never seen a robber, and I expressed a strong desire to see Mandrin. At this critical moment arrived Father Antoine, a capuchin who had performed the office of *curé* three months, our rector being dead. This worthy capuchin was possessed of a great deal of courage, as he had proved on several occasions when fires had taken place, and at such times he had often risked his life with an intrepidity truly admirable. We all esteemed him much: he had given me images and chaplets, he was my confessor, and I had for him an equal feeling of attachment and respect. These sentiments, which he was worthy of inspiring, have impressed me, throughout my life, with a feeling of respect towards capuchins in general; and the remembrance of this virtuous priest has led me to introduce some of them into those

* Madame Duchastelet was of the family of the Letonnelliers of Breteuil.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

romances which I have tried to make the most interesting—in the Duchess of La Vallière, and the Siege of Rochelle.

The presence of Father Antoine gave us a little courage. At last, the Marquis of Breteuil was announced, and an ill-looking man entered, followed by two officers of very dark complexion. Persuaded that I beheld Mandrin, I gazed upon him with an eagerness which nothing could divert, and I was greatly astonished that a robber should not have a more marked expression of face; he thought proper to prolong his visit till supper was announced, when my mother, with a trembling voice, invited him to sup with us; he accepted the invitation; Father Antoine remained, and we sat down to table; suddenly a large cat belonging to my mother came and leaped on the colonel's shoulder, who immediately grew pale, and nearly fainted; one of the officers said, that the Marquis had an invincible antipathy to cats. I turned to Mademoiselle de Mars, who sat by my side, and said to her in a whisper; "That can't be Mandrin, for he would not have been afraid of a cat." I happened to be right—it was not Mandrin, but a Marquis de Breteuil of some regiment, I now forget which.

In the mean time, our fêtes continued, and my father, who had now been absent eighteen months, was not yet returned. My mother, who wished to

add a *ballet* to our concerts and tragedies, sent for a dancer from Melun, called Mademoiselle Mion, who taught me to dance the minuet and a scene of a ballet, that I was to play alone in my costume of Love, which I now wore always. Mademoiselle Mion, was red-haired, and addicted to liquor; at the expiry of three months she was dismissed, and in her place came a dancer, fifty years old, who was besides a fencing-master: he added to my scene a saraband, and found me so alert, that he proposed to teach me fencing—an idea with which I was delighted, and I made such progress, that my mother thought of making me play Darviane in Mélanide de la Chaussée, a part in which I had to draw my sword and defend myself. I now quitted my costume of Love for an elegant male dress which was made for me, and which I constantly wore up to the time of leaving Burgundy. It was a strange thing, at the time of which I speak, to bring up a little girl in habits so unusual to her sex; and I have been always surprised since, to think that Father Antoine, who was truly pious, should have made no remarks on the subject, and that no one, as far as I know, should have appeared shocked at such an innovation. In other points, I gained the advantage of having my feet better placed, and of walking better than women in general, and above all being more agile than any I have known. I led a charming life: in

the morning I played a little on the harpsichord and sung, afterwards I studied my parts, then I took my lesson of dancing and fencing. Afterwards I read till dinner with Mademoiselle de Mars. One of our neighbours had lent her the novel of the Queen of Navarre, by Mademoiselle de la Force,* which we absolutely devoured; we read it twice. I perused it twenty years after with great pleasure, and have always had a particular affection for this romance, to which the remembrance of the pleasure it afforded me in my childhood has doubtless contributed. On quitting table we read pious books, under the direction of Father Antoine, such as the Gospels, the Imitation of Jesus Christ, and the Daily Thoughts of a Christian. From thence we passed into the drawing-room when there was no company, (my mother was always at that hour in her room,) and there we amused ourselves with making garlands of artificial flowers for our fêtes. It was a woman from Bourbon who taught us to make them; they were rude imitations made with paper. The servants worked at them

* Charlotte Rose de Caumont de la Force, died in 1724, aged 74. Her compositions, which are founded on historical facts, may have given to Sir Walter Scott and other writers of our age the idea of their historical novels; she wrote verses well. Her principal works are, the Secret History of Burgundy, in 2 volumes, of Margaret of Valois, in 4 volumes; and the Authentic Memoirs of the Duchess of Bar, sister of Henry IV.—*(Note by the Editor.)*

along with us, and often worthy Father Antoine has helped us to paint them. Afterwards Mademoiselle de Mars and I went to walk. After our fêtes were over, that is to say, since I had quitted women's clothes, I was a great deal less easily governed than before; I no longer conversed; my only delight was in running on before my governess, leaping little ditches, and performing a hundred pranks; and this lasted till I left Burgundy.

Here is the first origin of my dislike to Voltaire. The neighbour who lent books to Mademoiselle de Mars lent her a pamphlet recently arrived from Paris, against Voltaire. We knew the greater part of his tragedies, had played Zaïre, and had read the others; and on this account the pamphlet interested us: in it we saw with horror that the man we had so much admired was an infidel. The pamphlet concluded with some poor verses, meant to be satirical, in which Voltaire was mentioned under an anagram of his name, and each stanza finished with a line which I have always remembered, and in which Voltaire is thus ironically praised.

"Ma foi, Tolvaire est un grand homme!"

We did not much admire the verses: but the accusations contained in the pamphlet made a deep impression upon us. I have neither read nor seen it since. As

there are many religious sentiments in Zaïre, I was doubly indignant against the author: I lost a great deal of my admiration for Zaïre, and gave it all to my part of Iphigenia in Aulis, and consequently to Racine, who, I was assured, was equally virtuous as a man and sublime as a poet. Yet, my success in Zaïre had been so brilliant that the ladies of Moulins, who witnessed our performances, declared seriously, that my talent for tragedy *was superior to that of Mademoiselle Clairon*. These extravagant praises made Mademoiselle de Mars smile, especially as she used to ridicule a little my emphatic tone in pronouncing the words "est-ce vous, Nérestan?" and on the other hand I mimicked tolerably, between ourselves, her eyes so haggard and full of fury, her sharp tone and her lisp, when at the catastrophe she cries to Orosmane, "Tigre, altéré de sang!" These mimicries of ourselves would make us laugh till the tears came into our eyes, and this accustomed me to despise small occasions of ridicule, and to attach importance only to things worthy of estimation—in short to despise only what is vicious, and not merely trifles.

About this time there arrived at Saint Aubin a person who excited my curiosity extremely. He was a very bad writer, but the first man of letters I had ever seen. He had been at college with my father, who loved without esteeming him: a law-suit obliged him to go to Dijôn, from whence he came to Saint

Aubin. This was the Chevalier de La Morlière,* author of several ill-written and licentious novels. We were merely told that he was the author of several printed works, which gave me a high idea of him; but this opinion did not last long. M. de La Morlière, who was a good declaimer, made me recite the parts of Zaïre and Iphigenia, and Mademoiselle de Mars that of Fatima in Zaïre, when suddenly he took it into his head to become enamoured of Mademoiselle de Mars, who finding his love ridiculous, and his declaration of it impertinent, treated him with great disdain; and from this time, he conceived an aversion for her, which rendered him odious in my eyes. Luckily we got rid of him in a month, when he set out for Paris. A few days after the small-pox became epidemic at Saint Aubin. All sorts of precautions were taken to preserve me from it, but my own imprudence rendered them useless. A servant whom I was much attached to, called Montigni, had symptoms of that horrible disease, which in fact afterwards seized her: I went secretly to see her

* The chevalier Jaques Louis Auguste de la Morlière of La Rochette died at Paris in 1785. He is the writer of several detestable comedies and licentious novels, of which the only one that met with even a temporary success was that entitled *Angola*; however this was said not to be his, but to have been a plagiarism; in fact at the time a periodical work, speaking of M. de la Morlière, calls him the Usurper of the Realm of Angola.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

at a house in the village whither she was removed; the sight of her terrified me; two days afterwards I fell ill, and took the confluent small pox, which reduced me to the last extremity, but I was so carefully treated by Doctor Pinot, that I had not a single mark. Mademoiselle de Mars shewed me during this illness the most touching proofs of attachment, which vividly increased my love for her. I was rapidly recovering in autumn, when we quitted Saint Aubin, the château having become uninhabitable: and we went to Bourbon-Lancy, where my mother hired a very pretty house and garden. The Countess of Sercey, my aunt by the father's side, had arrived there with her husband, who was afflicted with palsy: and of whom I have related in my *Souvenirs* a touching instance of paternal affection.* We passed all the winter in

* The following is the manner in which the story is told by the author:—" The Countess of Sercey, my aunt, had carried to the baths of Bourbon-Lancy her husband, who was subject to apoplexy, and had lost the use of half his body in consequence of palsy. He had been two months at the waters, and was still in the same condition, confined to bed, unable to speak, giving no sign of consciousness, deprived of all power in his right arm, when my aunt received a letter from M. de Chézac, a commander in the navy, (we were then at war with England,) detailing a brilliant action in which young Lucan de Sercey, who served in the navy, had displayed great gallantry. He was the first to board the enemy's vessel, and though several times wounded he performed prodigies of valour. The enemy's ship was taken, and after the combat young De Sercey, who was covered with blood, was

performing tragedies and comedies in an elegant little theatre, which my mother caused to be built. I played Zaïre, Iphigenia, Hector (in Reynard's *Gamester*); Darviane, in *Mélanide;* the peasant in *George Dandin;* another small part in *Attendez moi sous l'orme,* and Cénie in the piece of that name.

asked about his wounds in order that they might be attended to. 'I fancy,' said he, 'it is English blood, for I feel no pain.' It was his own; he had received three wounds, none of which, however, were dangerous. His mother received along with the letter of M. de Chézac one from her son's own hand.

"Madame de Sercey, believing that her husband still preserved a sort of internal consciousness determined on reading him this account. There were seven or eight persons in the room, of whom I was one. All the curtains were undrawn, and we gathered round the bed; I sat down on a stool at the foot, fixing my eyes on the sick man, who seemed to pay no attention to all this; but when my aunt, sitting by the bedside, pronounced the name of his son, and mentioned that the boy whom he loved so much had covered himself with glory, a vivid emotion was visible on his features: he looked earnestly at Madame de Sercey, who read aloud, though in a subdued tone, the letter of M. de Chézac. When she had finished, two tears stole down the sick man's cheeks; and, raising the arm which had been immovable and lifeless for three months, he joined his hands together, raised them to heaven, and cried distinctly "O my God!" Every one burst into tears, and it was believed that a cure would be operated; but this miracle of sensibility was only wrought to produce to a tender father his last pleasure: his latest gleam of intelligence was a passionate sentiment of joy and gratitude to the Supreme Being: he recovered all his powers for a few minutes, but no longer, and died a few months after."—*(Note by the Editor.)*

The whole winter passed in these diversions. In speaking of my studies I have not mentioned writing, and for a good reason, viz. that I never received a single lesson. It is somewhat singular that a person who has written so much should never have learnt to write; but the fact is so. In January, 1757, at the age of eleven, I wished to write to my father on the new year, and never having had a pen in my hand, I wrote a long letter in a large and detestable character; but it was well spelt, for my reading, as I have already stated, had fixed the words in my memory as they were to be written. From that time I taught myself to write, and improved by slow degrees. I do not write a fine hand, but my writing is rather neat, and very legible. At last my father arrived in the spring, and this prolonged our fêtes for two months more. About this time a circumstance occurred which I cannot omit; Mademoiselle de Mars and I had each a little cabinet within our rooms, which were at the top of the house, under a large garret. One day after dinner I went into Mademoiselle de Mars' cabinet to ask her to go and walk with me; she was writing, and said she could not go for half an hour. I insisted; she refused positively: I would not yield, and tormented her so long that she consented, though with a very bad grace, and I dragged her with me almost by force. We had scarcely passed the threshold of the door, and the train of her gown was still

within the cabinet, (for at that time trains were worn with the plainest gowns,) when the roof of it fell in with a terrible crash, and a servant who was drying linen in the garret above fell into the cabinet on a beam, but received only a few contusions. Thus my importunity, or rather my presentiment, saved both our lives.

Before quitting Burgundy, I shall here give the history of what a woman never forgets—the first passion she inspires. I was but a child of eleven years and nine months, and very small for my age; besides, I had a face and features so delicate, that those who saw me for the first time never supposed me older than eight or nine at farthest; yet a young man of eighteen became desperately in love with me, the son of Doctor Pinot, one of the first physicians at the baths of Bourbon-Lancy. He had performed parts in our tragedies and comedies for two years: I have already spoken of his vehemence in the former. None of us suspected his folly, and certainly I had not the slightest idea of it! when one morning, after the rehearsal of the *Distrait* of Regnard, the young man came up to me, and seizing the moment when I was standing separate from the other actors, in the side scene, and with an air of wildness in his looks, gave me a note, begging me, in a low tone, to read it, and to let no one see it. I took the note, though much surprised, and he left me. Mademoiselle de

Mars soon after joined me. I put the note in my pocket, and we went up stairs to our room. I hesitated about showing the note to Mademoiselle de Mars, as I had been charged so strongly to show it to no one; but to keep a secret with the friend I loved so dearly weighed heavily upon my conscience; at the same time my curiosity was extreme. At last Mademoiselle de Mars left me. I ran into my cabinet, locked the door, and read the note, which contained a serious declaration of love. My first movement was to be excessively shocked that the son of a physician—a person of no rank—should presume to talk of love to me! I went immediately and showed the note to Mademoiselle de Mars, who desired me to carry it to my mother, which I did. The young man was reprimanded by his father, as he deserved to be; and he felt so much chagrin on the occasion, that he enlisted in the army, and left the place. Fifteen years afterwards his father being in Paris came to pay a visit to me at the Palais Royal. I enquired about his son, which made him smile: he then told me he had believed his son dead, and had mourned him three years, when he came home again; that he had obtained his discharge; that he was married and happy, and an excellent young man.

I have forgotten to mention one of our neighbours, the Baron de Busseuil, for whom I felt a great veneration. He was an old bachelor of eighty, and a re-

lation of my father, who called him his uncle. He had a pretty château, where he occasionally went to spend three or four days. M. de Busseuil had performed at the age of forty-five, an action of the most extraordinary and courageous description. He was very tall, and of vast bodily strength. At the end of one summer a hungry wolf had made prodigious ravages on his grounds. He assembled his peasants, and armed them with pistols, and it was decided that after mass they should all go to hunt this wolf, which was agreed on; but on entering a hollow pass which led to the wood, the wolf suddenly appeared so near them that it was impossible to avoid it, the road being at that place very deep and narrow. M. de Busseuil, at the head of his troop, ordered them to halt; then advancing to the wolf, who was rushing upon them open-mouthed, he thrust his right hand into its throat, seized the ferocious animal by the tongue, and held it till it was killed by his followers. He had his right thumb amputated, and went to the sea-side, which saved him from canine madness.*

This action was mentioned in all the newspapers, and appeared so wonderful that it procured M. de

* The opinion which was then in vogue with regard to the efficacy of sea bathing against madness has since much declined. It is known that this remedy is rather the most successful that has yet been tried for this terrible malady: and to this conclusion comes all the boasted knowledge of the physicians.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

Busseuil the Cross of St. Louis, which was sent to him by the Regent; the only instance, I believe, of a like honour for such an enterprize. This venerable old man loved me much, and often placed me on his knees; I took great pleasure in respectfully kissing the wounded hand, and to hear him detail all the particulars of his spirited feat.

Two months after the romantic flight of Dr. Pinot's son, my mother went to Paris: the boxes were packed as if we were never to return; my mother took with her Mademoiselle de Mars, myself, and all her women; my father only remained behind. I confess to my shame, that I quitted Burgundy without regret—the beautiful country where I was born, and where my childhood had glided by so gaily and so smoothly; and which I could not behold fifteen years after, without shedding tears, and experiencing the most lively emotion! But childhood has none of these sensations; it loves changes, because it requires them; in order to regret, we must be able to *compare*, and time must form recollections, and ripen them by judgment.

The journey was long, because my mother travelled with her own horses, and performed part of the journey in a large boat, which contained, along with ourselves, our carriage and horses. We lodged at Orleans with a friend of my mother's, where I reassumed my female dress, never again to quit it.

AHARAJA SERFOJI'S

There it was that I read *Telemachus* for the first time, and so far from feeling its beauties, I considered it far inferior to *Clelia:* in spite of this sound opinion on the subject, I was obliged to finish it out of complaisance to Mademoiselle de Mars, for we passed nearly the whole day in our room. My mother sent us thither almost immediately after dinner, excepting on two evenings, when I was made to sing, play on the harpsichord, and recite the monologue of Alzire,

"Mânes de mon amant, j'ai donc trahi ma foi, &c."

before a numerous company.

We arrived at Paris about the end of the summer. I enjoyed great pleasure in again seeing my brother, whom I had always loved with the utmost tenderness. My aunt, Madame de Bellevau, came on our arrival, to pay us a visit at our hotel. She was then twenty-eight, and if she had even had tolerable teeth, she would have been a perfect beauty. She had a majestic figure, elegant and refined manners, a beautiful complexion, and regular features; joined to all which, her clever and piquant conversation, and her other accomplishments, rendered her one of the most charming women I have ever seen. She thought me pretty: she was delighted with my singing and my declamation, and caressed me much. I conceived a strong attachment for her, yet at the same time I

stood greatly in awe of her: her graces and her elegance had a much greater effect upon me than would have been produced by an air of severity; I dreaded lest she should discover in me something *provincial* in my tone or manner; and for the first time in my life I was afraid of ridicule, and began to attach an artificial importance to little things—the air of Paris had already its effect upon me. In a month we went to lodge altogether at Madame de Bellevau's; I was rejoiced at finding my two cousins there; the eldest was nine, and the youngest seven years of age. The elder was at that time remarkable for her beauty, but her face, which was perfect, had nothing childish in its expression: her features were quite formed, and her head was that of a handsome woman of twenty. For this reason it is, perhaps, that she did not turn out even pretty. At fifteen, her nose, which had enlarged prodigiously, spoiled her face, her chin lengthened excessively, and nothing remained of her early beauty, but her fine fair hair, and a tolerable shape. The youngest, without being pretty, had an agreeable face. We dined at table, and supped in our own rooms. I continued my studies under Mademoiselle de Mars, but still with little pains, as far as regarded the harpsichord. I had a master for the guitar; I was charmed with this instrument, and made rapid progress in learning it.

At the house of my aunt I saw that winter a celebrated author, M. Marmontel.* He came to read to her his *Tales;* I was present at the reading of that called, I think, *The self-styled Philosopher*, in which a fat president's wife, begrimed with snuff, leads about in triumph this pretended sage, with a rose-coloured ribbon. Though but twelve years old, I thought this story both dull and absurd; and I thought rightly. The author was far from supposing that the little girl then before him, would one day write a critique on these tales, which should throw him into transports of rage.† Neither friendships nor dislikes have ever had the least influence on my judgment or opinions. I thought my aunt clever and agreeable, and yet, almost all her notions seemed to me erroneous; and they were so in reality; but she urged them with grace and without pedantry: she had genuine feelings, and the errors she adopted proceeded rather from her ignorance and her injudicious reading, than from any want of talent: so that they seemed in her to be only the effects of levity and want of reflection. She has published a little novel, called "Letters of a young Widow," which is written with much grace and natural feeling.

* His collected works form more than thirty volumes, 8vo.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

† In the Tale called "Les Deux Réputations."—(*Note by the Author.*)

At Madame de Bellevau's I saw also M. de Mondorge,* a financier and a man of letters, who was then at least forty-six or forty-seven, and who, ten or twelve years after, married the eldest of my cousins. M. de Mondorge was full of talent, accomplishments and suavity of manner. He was the writer of several songs and operas. The poetry in the opera, called *Les Talens Lyriques*, is by him. I was taught all his songs, of which I have never forgot the following, which has not appeared in print;

D'Hébé vous avez la jeunesse
Et les appas,
Dans les yeux certaine finesse
Qu'elle n'a pas.
Si la belle êut joint votre grâce
A sa beauté,
Jamais Ganymède à sa place
Ne fût monté.†

Comme elle remplissez mon verre;
Et jaime mieux
Avec vous boire sur la terre
Que d'être aux cieux.

* Antoine Gantier de Mondorge, was born at Lyons, in 1727, and died at Paris in 1768: he has composed a great deal of light poetry, some dramatic pieces, and letters on the fine arts—(*Note by the Editor.*)

† Hebe, it will be remembered, is said to have incurred the anger of the gods, by falling as she handed round the nectar.—(*Note by the Author.*)

Versez, versez toujours de même ;
Recommencez.
Ah ! s'il faut boire autant que j'aime,
Versez, versez.

M. de Mondorge was extremely pleasant in conversation, his talk was full of piquant sallies and anecdotes : he had an excellent taste, and is the first man who gave me the idea of truly agreeable conversation. I was never tired of hearing him talk. I used to write continually in my huge and villainous hand, long letters to the niece of a Curé of Bourbon-Lancy. My mother one day showed one of sixteen pages to M. de Mondorge, who praised it in extravagant terms. He exhorted me earnestly to continue to read and write, and gave out the most flattering predictions concerning me. This was my first encouragement in this way. The verses of M. de Mondorge gave me a great inclination to compose some ; I had a strong feeling of harmony, and my frequent performances in tragedy and in comedy, had imbued me with a profound taste for poetry. My mother had a waiting-maid called *Victoire;* one of my own names was *Felicité*, and these two joined to that of Mademoiselle de *Mars*, furnished me with the first hint of my earliest poetical composition, which I here subjoin :

Felicité, Mars, et Victoire
Se trouvent rassemblés chez nous.
Est-il rien de plus grand, est-il rien de plus doux
Que de fixer chez soi le bonheur et la gloire?

M. de Mondorge thought the verses wonderful for my age; (I was just then turned of twelve) he copied them, showed them to all his acquaintance, and a few days afterwards, he presented me with a copy of the sacred poetry and the odes of J. B. Rosseau, splendidly bound in red morocco. In six months I knew all these magnificent verses; and I had constantly one of the little volumes in my pocket, My friends loved to hear me recite this fine poetry; the poems which I repeated best, were

J'ai vu mes tristes journées, &c.

the ode to Prince Eugene, and the ode to Fortune. It was impossible for me to follow the advice of M. de Mondorge, and to read constantly, for I had no books; my aunt read little more than pamphlets, of which most were interdicted to me. Besides, I should have required some direction in my reading, and I had no guide. I devoted four hours daily to the harpsichord, singing, and the guitar; I spent an hour in learning verses; I passed every day at least three hours with my aunt; and I went every evening either to the Opera or the Theatre Francais, at both of which my aunt had a box. I witnessed the first appearance of Mademoiselle Arnoult * at the Opera; and I can

* This actress, as celebrated for her *bon mots* as her talents, was born in 1774, and was not quite fourteen when she made her first appearance at the Opera in 1757; she performed there till 1778,

yet remember the dress she wore—it was lilac and silver over a large hoop. At the Comédie Francaise, I saw the first representation of the Hypermnestra of Lemierre;* I loved theatrical representations prodigiously, and tragedy in particular. In this manner my days were completely filled up, and if not with perfect propriety, at least in such a way as left no time for any serious study.

This very winter Providence preserved my life in a remarkable manner. My mother wishing to give me her portrait in miniature, caused it to be set in a bracelet encircled with opals and emeralds. This bracelet (which was stolen from me seven or eight years after) was so precious to me, that I have given a similar one (in description) to one of my heroines in

when she retired. She died in 1803. It was Mademoiselle Arnoult, who said, on seeing a little rivulet in a garden in the English style, which was dignified with the name of a river, *Cela ressemble à une riviere comme deux gouttes d'eau.* It was she also who made the pleasant variation on Lemierre's absurd verse,

> Bouche, œil, sein, port, teint, taille, en elle tout ravit.

This is the variation of Mademoiselle Arnoult,

> En toi tout est touchant, tout attendrit, tout touche,
> Sein, bras, front. teint, port, taille, &c.

* Lemierre was born at Paris, and died at St. Germain en Laye, in July 1793, aged 72. *Hypermnestra* and the *Widow of Malabar*, are the only two tragedies of this poet that keep possession of the stage.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

the *Knights of the Swan.* My mother bethought herself of a charming manner of presenting this bracelet, by fixing it on my arm during my sleep. I slept alone in my room, and Mademoiselle de Mars in a cabinet beside it; we were both in a profound slumber when my mother softly entered the room with the bracelet and a dark lantern. What were her terror and surprise, to find the chamber full of a thick smoke, and the curtains and the bed in flames! . . . . I was in a deep sleep, the fire was just about to envelope me, and ten minutes longer my mother would have been too late! I was dragged out of bed, and carried into another room; there I was questioned and scolded, an alarm was made, and all the family assembled: I shall never forget that terrible tumult! I confessed, that being desirous of reading in bed, the words of the Gascon opera, called Alcimadure, in order to understand them better in hearing them sung, I had fallen asleep while reading, leaving my candle burning. As a punishment, I did not receive my bracelet for eight days after this accident.

About this, appeared M. Helvetius's ill-written and pernicious book, De l'Esprit.* I heard a great deal of rational discussion upon this work; and every one seemed disgusted with the aim and the principles of

* M. Helvetius was born in 1715, and died in 1771.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S

the author. M. Helvetius was styled a *philosopher*: and all I could gather on the subject, (and I listened with great curiosity) implanted in my young imagination a profound contempt for modern philosophy. M. de Mondorge related to us daily some new trait concerning the book and its author. Among others, his recantation, which was thought disgraceful, because nobody believed it was sincere. M. de Mondorge spoke extremely well on the infamous principles of this work.*

At the close of the winter we went to Saint Mandé, to a country house of my aunt's. This house was delightful, with a charming garden, which had a door communicating with the forest of Vincennes. There were four children here, of whom I was the eldest: my brother, my two cousins and myself. My aunt lodged on the ground floor; the drawing room, which was very elegant and spacious, was on the first floor; my harpsichord was placed here, and the room was used only for my studies and our play, except when there came much company—a thing which rarely happened more than once in eight or ten days.

* "This infamous book," says Collé, "the detestation of all fathers of families, and every honest man, owed its ephemeral reputation only to its impudence. It is as dull as wicked."—(*Memoirs of Collé*, vol. ii. p. 256.) I quote this judgment as impartial, for Collé was certainly neither a saint nor a rigid moralist.—(*Note by the Author.*)

When there were not more than three or four persons of my aunt's intimate acquaintance, she used to remain in her own room with my mother.

This summer passed away delightfully for me; after my three or four hours of musical study, I was at liberty to dispose of my time, which I passed in walks, or in new games which were invented by myself. We had pantomimes made up of parts of the tragedies which I knew, and the romances I had read, with some little additions of my own. The actors were my brother, my cousins, Mademoiselle de Mars and I, and the waiting maids were the audience. By degrees we had pieces (still of the heroic description) where we had to invent our own speeches; but I had always a part which nearly filled up the piece, for I had great difficulty in inspiring my actors. Nevertheless this kind of amusement acquired so much celebrity in the house, that we soon had for spectators my mother, my aunt, and their visitors. They engaged us to have two fixed representations a week, which lasted all the summer. Jéliote came from time to time and sung at the end of the pieces; and often he sung duets with me. On these days I played on the harpsichord and the guitar, and our little fêtes met with great applause.

My brother was by no means so remarkable a child as I was: he had a pretty face, but he was shy, awkward, and of an inconceivable simplicity. He

had in vain requested my father to permit him to use a gun; he was always told that it should only be when he should have acquired some knowledge of fencing, for which he had not the slightest taste. He then adopted the following expedient: he loaded a gun, shut himself up in his room, and in order to fire without making any noise, he bethought him of thrusting the barrel of the gun under the mattress of the bed; he then fired in this prudent manner, set fire to the bed, and was himself knocked down by the rebound. The family arrived, and discovered with much surprise his singular invention. In our garden was a little door which led into the forest of Vincennes; an old servant called Veronica had a key to it, which she often lent us for half an hour; on such occasions we used to get into the wood, and to give us dignity in the eyes of the passengers, the elder of my cousins and I used to make my brother hold up alternately our trains; (for the gowns and even frocks of these days had trains;) and this must have appeared the more singular, as my brother, being intended for an ecclesiastic, wore constantly the dress of an *abbé*. Nevertheless he held up our trains with a great deal of gravity, and we walked about in this fashion during our half hour. With all this simplicity the boy had a great deal of understanding and talent. Six months after, the *Journal Encyclopédique* proposed publicly a problem, to which he re-

turned an answer, signed *A Scholar of M. Bertaut's of eleven years old.* It was not known at his school that the solution was his, and it was matter of great surprise when they came to find out the author; from that time his masters paid much attention to him, and his progress was beyond their most sanguine expectation.

We returned to Paris at the close of the autumn, and the following winter passed away like the preceding. On New Year's day M. de Mondorge made me a present of Gresset's Poems* and La Fontaine's Fables. I learnt by heart at his desire the charming *Epistle to my Sister, on my Recovery, and the Chartreuse;* and from La Fontaine, the Fables of the Oak and the Reed, the Mule, the Town Rat, the Wolf and the Lamb, Love and Folly, the Pigeon and the Ant, Baucis and Philemon, the two Pigeons and the Hare; none of which I have ever forgotten, and which joined to what I knew already, filled my memory with excellent verses. I have forgotten to mention that during the three months we passed at Saint Mandé, I was present regularly at my brother's Latin lessons, which he received from an excellent

* Jean Baptiste Louis Gresset, who was born in 1709 at Amiens, and died in the same town in 1777, is too well known, and his works have had too much celebrity to make it necessary to mention them. J. B. Rousseau called Vert Vert the literary phenomenon.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

SERFOJI'S

and very learned tutor, who, charmed with my memory, contrived to excite my self-love so much, as to inspire me with all the emulation of a scholar. He paid special attention to me, and I made so much progress, that I became attached to the study. I wished to continue it at Paris, but my mother would not permit it; I gained however in this way some notions upon grammar, which have been since useful to me.

Towards the end of the winter I experienced many afflictions, to which I was so much the more sensible, as I had hitherto been perfectly happy; but I only felt vividly the afflictions of the heart, not the reverses of fortune. I had fancied myself so often, in my day-dreams, placed in disastrous situations, that I had acquired a sort of energy and determination which elevated me above the accidents of fortune. My mind was not yet formed, and I was still a child in reference to my tastes and my extreme naiveté, but my mind had a force which is rarely found in a child of thirteen. I was informed of the complete ruin of my father, and the sale of Saint Aubin; after all our debts were paid, there would only remain an annuity of 1200 francs a year, payable during the life-time of my father and mother; and not a refuge for us on the earth! . . . At the same time my mother and my aunt quarrelled; my mother told me that we must quit her house in a month, and that I was to

lose Mademoiselle de Mars, whom her circumstances did not allow her to retain! . . . I loved my aunt and Mademoiselle de Mars; my grief, which was extreme, displeased my mother, and I was forced to conceal it . . . I had the courage to do so, but I cried every night in bed, sometimes two or three hours. Mademoiselle de Mars was no less afflicted—not but that it would be easy for her, with her talents and her good sense, to find a situation at Paris more lucrative than that she was about to quit—besides which she had an aunt at Paris in easy circumstances, who was to take her into her house till she found another situation; but she loved me sincerely, and we had flattered ourselves so often that we should never part! . . . I shall never forget the evening before that cruel separation. She allowed me to sit up with her till one in the morning; she gave me excellent advice on the conduct of my life; made me promise to have more application, to employ my time better, and to moderate my vivacity, which, though it did not give me a tendency to be passionate, made me too enthusiastic about any thing that pleased me. Lastly, she exhorted me to preserve my sense of religion. We exchanged our prayer-books with each other; I preserved her's more than twenty years; her name was written in it; I afterwards lost it in travelling. I gave her a little ring of my hair which, for that purpose, I had requested my cousin to return

to me. We promised to pray for each other night and morning; we shed torrents of tears, and I wept in bed almost the whole night. On awaking I was shocked to hear that she had left the house at seven in the morning; she had left me the hope of seeing her again, and that she would breakfast with me; I cried so bitterly that my face was swollen; I was reprimanded, and I made an effort to command myself; but all the day I felt as if I was choked with grief.

A fortnight after, we quitted my aunt's house, who showed me many proofs of her tenderness and regret at losing me. She pressed me in her arms, and while her tears mingled with mine, she said, "Poor child, you will never be happy—you have too much sensibility." She judged truly. She gave me a pretty little porcelain basket, filled with chocolate pastilles wrapped up in a paper, among which I found a very handsome ruby ring, set with diamonds. I felt little regret for my cousins; the youngest was too much of a child, and the eldest had too little sensibility, and had always discovered a great deal of jealousy of the marked preference of her aunt for me; she has since become a most estimable woman. We went to lodge in the Rue Traversière, in a small lodging on the ground floor, looking out upon a damp garden; our apartments seemed to me very melancholy, and wretched in comparison with the elegant mansion we

had just quitted. Alas! how solitary I felt myself, deprived of the dear friend with whom I had passed seven years and a half—that is to say, more than the half of my life!

A fortnight after, we went to Passy to the house of M. de la Popelinière, the farmer-general, where we spent all the summer. M. de la Popelinière was an old gentleman of sixty-six, in robust health, with a face expressive of good nature and talent: he did not appear to be more than fifty. Whatever oddities may have been attributed to this man, so celebrated for his splendour and his beneficence, it would be impossible to accuse him of any thing unjust or vicious. He had a great deal of wit, his character was remarkable for facility and mildness, and he had a generous heart: he wrote verses with grace, and composed songs, comedies, and romances. He was the discriminating protector of poor authors and artists. He gave dowries yearly to six poor girls, whom he gave away in marriage; and he did infinite good at Passy, by finding work for the industrious, and distributing abundant charities among the indigent families of the place. His morals were most pure, and his conduct becoming and regular; he kept up a great establishment without contracting any debts; he received much company, and saw the best society of his day; he did the honours of his house with as much grace as generosity; he never played, and allowed no play at his

house, except round games; in short, at once sober and generous, he was a lover of literature, of the arts, and of talent; he possessed all the domestic virtues; he was a good master, a good parent, a faithful and tender friend. Such was the man in whom the mocking wits of the day found an inexhaustible subject of ridicule. It must be allowed, that there was too much pomp, show, and singularity in some of his actions—and this is what is rarely pardoned in a person of his rank: for of all faults, ostentation in doing good, is that for which the world has the least indulgence. We do not love those great examples who throw a sort of blame upon those who do not imitate them, though they have it in their power. The world does not like it to pass into a maxim, that it is better to employ a great fortune in doing good, even through vanity, than to throw it away in a brilliant but frivolous luxury. People always cry out that good deeds should be done in secret, as if some actions, and those perhaps the best and the most useful, *could* be done in secret! It is ever thus that a mean and foolish vanity has tried to ridicule a noble self-love, and has often even calumniated the purest intentions of the sincerest Christian charity. For my own part I confess, that throughout my life I have always yielded to the pleasure I felt in contemplating goodness wherever I have found it. To seek for bad motives to good actions, is in some degree to participate in the

baseness of those ungrateful persons who never fail to find reasons of this kind to dispense them from the obligation they owe to their benefactors.

The very day of my arrival at Passy, I gave a new proof of the talent which I have received from nature —of reading in the features the vices of the heart. After having paid and received the first compliments, I turned round, and saw behind me a man about fifty, very thick and short, and dressed like an *abbé*, whose expression of face was so revolting to me, that it made me shudder; my mother asked what was the matter with me, and I replied in a low tone, "Look at that abbé, I am sure he will be hanged." My mother reprimanded me, but I still kept my opinion. This man was the famous Abbé de la Coste, who, five months afterwards went to Toulouse to propose, on the part of M. de la Popelinière, for Mademoiselle de Mondran, the daughter of a capitoul (a kind of sheriff) whom M. de la Popelinière wished to marry on the reputation of her talents, and whom, in fact, he did marry. This remaining singularity ended ill: for this marriage rendered M. de la Popelinière so unhappy, that grief carried him to his grave in eighteen months after. It was his fate to be unlucky in wives. All the world has heard of the notorious adventures of his first wife with the Maréchal de Richelieu. I have introduced the principal facts into the history of M. and Madame du Resnel in my novel of the Rival

Mothers. To return to the Abbé de la Coste; a short time after the marriage of M. de la Popelinière with Mademoiselle de Mondran, he was convicted of the double crime of having spread the most defamatory accusations against M. de la Popelinière, and several other persons, and to have thrown the suspicions of those libels, with great appearance of probability, upon a friend of M. de la Popelinierè, whom he wished to ruin. In order to give colour to the accusation, this villain put a great deal of abuse of himself into his libels. All these atrocities, and many others were afterwards discovered, along with a great number of forgeries and other crimes. This unworthy abbé (who was not a priest) was tried and condemned to the pillory and the galleys. The day he was conducted to the grève to undergo his punishment, a stranger, seeing a great crowd on the streets, asked what was going forward, some one replied, "Oh! 'tis the ambassador of M. de la Popelinière, who is going to be presented."

Two days after our arrival at Passy, I was present at the celebration of the marriage of six poor girls, endowed by M. de la Popelinière. They were all uniformly dressed as peasants, but with some elegance. M. de la Popelinière gave them these dresses, a packet of clothes, and other necessaries, and five hundred francs to each couple; he was also at the whole expense of the nuptials; he devoted, yearly, six thousand francs

to that act of charity; there was a *bal champêtre* in the chateau at Passy, and a grand entertainment for the new married couples. I danced a great deal; I was much amused; and I was delighted with M. de la Popelinière, who gave entertainments of such a splendid kind. I looked upon him with admiration. From time to time he read to us, when the company was not too numerous, portions of an oriental romance, which he was then writing, called *Daira*, and which appeared to me charming. There lived in his house a woman of talent whose name happened to be that of the estate we had lost (Saint Aubin.) My mother had exchanged this name for that of Ducrest; but from habit she was still often styled the marchioness of Saint Aubin. The person so called, attached to the establishment of M. de la Popelinière, had not a single talent of a high order, but she had many agreeable ones; she was a good musician; sung Italian tolerably well; and played on the flageolet; she was, moreover, polite, modest, good-tempered, and amiable. This house was also the permanent residence of Madame Bélot,* author of the esteemed translation of Hume's History of England;

* Madame Bélot, who died at Chaillot, at a very advanced age, in 1805, was principally engaged upon English literature. She has translated into French the Dispensary, Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia, the History of the House of Tudor, of the Stuarts, and the Plantagenets. Her first work was "Reflections of a Provincial

she was a woman of great merit. At Passy, I heard the harp for the first time in my life. M. de la Popelinière had an excellent orchestra of his own. Gossec, an admirable composer, who is still living, belonged to it. But what delighted me most in it was an old player, a German, named Gaiffre, whom they styled King David, and to whom we owe the invention of pedals. Before his time, the harp, having no pedals, was an instrument of such limited compass, that it was only known in Germany in the streets or taverns. Gaiffre's invention ennobled it, and made it the finest of instruments. He only played upon it some very middling preludes, though he was a good musician: but he did not finger well, and had no idea of what might be done with that admirable instrument. He had in all four or five scholars, among whom were M. de Monville and Madame Saint Aubin, none of whom could do more than strike a few chords to accompany themselves in singing; and these were the only persons in France who could play upon the harp. Besides, the worthy M. Gaiffre seated his scholars awkwardly at the instrument, and made them sit too low, as some teachers of the harp still do; but he placed the hands in a good position, which is a great point. I con-

on the Discoveries of J. J. Rousseau, touching the inequality of conditions." This work, published in 1756, gave an advantageous idea of Madame Bélot's talents. (*Note by the Editor.*)

ceived such a love of the harp, that I earnestly entreated my mother to allow me to take lessons of Gaiffre, to which she consented. I commenced immediately; but, having only Gaiffre's harp, I could not practise alone, and was obliged to content myself with playing twice a-week with my teacher. Gaiffre, who was the best creature in the world, charmed with my zeal and my taste for the harp, paid particular attention to me: he gave me enormous lessons —some of three hours long. If I had had a harp of my own at Passy, nothing would have been wanting to my happiness. We acted plays, and performed some theatrical pieces by M. de la Popelinière;* I had several parts assigned to me: I played that of a simple ingenuous girl in a piece called *L'Indolente*, and that of a waiting-maid in another called *Les Joueurs*, neither of which have ever been printed. I danced on some of these occasions a *pas seul*, which was greatly applauded. A *maître de ballet*, belonging to the Italian

* M. de la Popelinière was born in 1692, and died in 1762. He was equally celebrated for his riches, his pretentions to talent, and his connubial misfortunes. In 1748, he discovered in the chimney of his wife's *boudoir*, a sliding pannel, which communicated with the adjoining house, in which the Duke de Richelieu lodged. La Popelinière made his wife's infidelity public, and obtained a divorce. He was the author of several works, of which one only (Daïra) has been published. —(*Note by the Editor.*)

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S

opera, called Deshaies, taught me this dance, which I was continually asked to perform, not only on the stage but in the drawing-room. I had a great talent for dancing; but I have not cultivated it, not being ambitious for applause of this kind. I have never been fond of dancing except in the country; and though I have gone to balls at court and elsewhere, it was rather for the sake of showing that I was invited, and to have the pleasure of wearing a prettier dress than I wore at other times. It has always seemed to me incomprehensible, how any one can attach any value to a talent, with which it is impossible to amuse one's self when alone, and in which you cannot acquire a decided superiority, unless you follow it as a profession; for the most middling dancer at the opera dances always infinitely better than the lady the most accomplished in this way.

M. de la Popelinière was enchanted with the little talents I possessed, and said often, with a profound sigh, in looking at me, "What a pity that she is but thirteen!" (1759.) I afterwards understood the meaning of this expression, so often repeated, and I myself regretted, that I was not three or four years older; for I had conceived such an admiration of him that I should have been delighted to become his wife. He is the only old man who has ever inspired me with a similar inclination. He gave me his portrait admirably engraved: he was represented sitting at a

desk, holding in his hand some faded roses, and beneath were these lines by his friend M. de Brousonel:

> Ce sage, des arts le Mécène,
> Par ses propres talens plein de célébrité,
> Est au sein de Plutus l'homme de Diogène,
> Et le plus tendre ami qu'ait eu l'humanité.

M. de la Popelinière, who thought, very justly, that these lines were not appropriate to the subject, wrote the following:

> Pour ces fleurs il n'est qu'un printemps;
> Du moins la vie a son automne.
> Prenons ce que le sort nous donne,
> Et connoissons le prix du temps.

These lines appeared to me so charming, and sunk so deeply into my memory, that more than half a century has not sufficed to erase them. As I was extremely desirous of the good opinion of M. de la Popelinière, I wished much that my mother should show him the lines I had composed on my own name and those of Mademoiselle de Mars and Victoire. M. de Mondorge had appeared so much struck with them, that I flattered myself M. de la Popelinière would be equally pleased, but my mother never mentioned them, and I never durst confide to her my secret vanity of authorship: for I stood so much in

awe of her, that I never could venture to speak to her frankly and openly. There is a good deal of extravagance in my character, but none in my opinions; and therefore I have reasoned soundly, and possess a good taste, though I have committed many ridiculous errors, and taken many unadvised steps. Either my confidence is unbounded, or I have none at all. My friendship is devotion, my esteem admiration: I have always seen clearly the faults of my friends, but I only considered them faults, because they must appear so to others; in my eyes they were only failings which I elevated into virtues; and these virtues, thus created by my own imagination, were to me the more attractive, because I knew they existed only for me, and that I alone could discover and appreciate them. Where I was not attached, I saw the good and the bad without exaggeration; and I have never judged falsely, either through aversion or resentment. I respected my mother, and I have never once failed in profound obedience to her. I thought myself bound to acknowledge, by my attentions, respect, and perfect obedience throughout her life, the feelings which I could not prove by familiarity and unreserve. There existed in our minds, opinions, tempers, and dispositions, the most singular contrast. She was serious, severe, and imposing in her manner; her face had the loftiest expression I have ever beheld; she had large black eyes, somewhat overshaded by the eyelids, but

of remarkable beauty: I never could withstand their penetrating glance. She had many admirable qualities; she was charitable and generous without pretending to be a saint; she had a strong sense of religion, and she possessed great talents, which would have been brilliantly developed if she had possessed more information. When she wished to please, no one could please more.

I rose very early at Passy, and used to take walks in the garden with Mademoiselle Victoire before my mother got up: Victoire sat at work upon a bench, while I walked about under her eye. There I amused myself with building castles in the air, and often held dialogues with myself, talking aloud; a habit which I have preserved during life, and which has procured me some of my most agreeable amusements and my greatest consolations. In these early dialogues, I fancied myself always with Mademoiselle de Mars, whom I figured coming in secret to see me. I confided to her all my adventures, and all my thoughts: I made her reply perfectly in character: she gave me excellent counsels for the present and the future; and she related to me many things which I invented with marvellous facility. I was so rapt in these imaginary conversations, that I question whether the reality would have been more charming to me. I was grieved when Victoire recalled me from my dreams, and I always promised my

friend to meet her again the day following at the same hour.

Our comedies, dances, and concerts obliged me, to my great regret, to interrupt my harp-studies; and I regretted this the more, as I could not play in the mornings before my mother awoke, lest I should disturb her—for I slept in a little cabinet close to her room. Nevertheless, being fond of entertainments, music, and fêtes, I amused myself exceedingly at Passy. Every Sunday a mass in music was celebrated in the chapel belonging to the house; Madame de Saint Aubin played on a small organ, and Gossec and the other musicians performed some fine symphonies. On the same day there was always a grand dinner, at which were present a great deal of company from Paris, among whom were always some ambassadors and their ladies: their conversation amused me much. M. de la Popelinière made them always talk of their own country, and I listened with infinite curiosity; after dinner the conversation was resumed, and no game was played but chess. At five o'clock we had a concert in a great gallery, to which great numbers came from Paris, who had not been invited to the previous dinner. We supped at nine. After supper we had generally a little private concert; M. de Monville, who was always with us on Sunday, played on the harp on these occasions, and I sang and played on the guitar. At half past eleven, we

retired to bed. On other days I went to bed at ten, even on our days of performance, excepting on Tuesdays, which were the days devoted to the wits and men of science. On these days we had always the Abbé d'Olivet* of the French Academy; Madame Riccoboni, author of the Letters of Miladi Catesby; (which were already published;) the celebrated Vancanson;† the Chevalier de Laurès, who composed verses; and M. Bertin,‡ another poet. On these occasions many artists also came, of whom I only remember Latour the painter; he was a singular character. He used to puzzle us, by enquiring how he came from Paris, telling us that it was neither in a boat nor by coach, neither on foot nor horseback, neither on ass nor mule, neither by land nor by swimming. Nobody could solve this riddle. He explained it thus: on setting out he plunged into the river, and being unable to swim, he laid hold on a boat with both hands; and was thus towed on to Passy.

* Joseph Thoulier d'Olivet, born in 1682, and buried in 1758, was one of the best of our grammarians, and among the most prolific of French writers. Voltaire styled him his master.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

† Vancanson, the greatest mechanician of his time, who made an automaton flute-player, and a duck which could eat and digest.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

‡ Bertin was born in 1752, and died in 1790. His Elegies, called Les Amours, and his other amatory poems, have gained him the title of the French Tibullus.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

After supper we had some reading, and I was made to recite verses, of which I knew a prodigious number by heart. Such was the course of my life, which was rendered still more agreeable to me by finding a friend in the house—a young lady, gentle, pretty and interesting, whom M. de la Popelinière had in some shape adopted as his daughter. He had married her to M. de Zimmermann, an officer in the Swiss guards; he was young and agreeable, and a good performer on the violin. The history of Madame de Zimmermann was remarkable. She was the daughter of a poor gentleman, and had been educated in the heart of the country, a hundred and fifty leagues from Paris; and for some family matter, which depended on the farmers-general, she had written to M. de la Popelinière, whom she knew only by report. M. de la Popelinière, knowing that the letter came from a young woman of eighteen, read the letter with much interest, though it was written with great simplicity; he admired the beauty of the handwriting and the correctness of the orthography, and granted the favour which had been asked. He then received a very pretty letter of thanks; he replied, and a correspondence ensued which lasted six months. M. de la Popelinière conceived a strong interest for a young girl who discovered so much talent, elegance and sensibility: he wrote into the country to make enquiries respecting

her; and in reply, his correspondent characterized her as very pretty, and a perfect angel in disposition and behaviour. He now became quite enamoured of her; he declared his sentiments, and received a reply which achieved the conquest; he offered his hand, which was accepted, and the young person came to Paris. The first interview cooled his ardour somewhat, but did not change his design: he did not however find his intended bride so pretty as he expected, because she was ill-dressed, had an awkward air, and was much freckled. In a few days M. de la Popelinière was so much disappointed in her talents, that he began to suspect her not to have been the writer of the letters he had so much admired. He accordingly questioned the young person on the subject, who frankly confessed that she could not even spell, and that she had only copied letters which were written by the *Curé* of the place. M. de la Popelinière gave her a handsome marriage present, diamonds worth thirty thousand francs, and a dowry of a hundred thousand francs; and she and her husband lived in the house of M. de la Popelinière. Madame de Zimmermann, when I became acquainted with her, had been married five years; she was no longer freckled; a dancing master had removed all her awkwardness of manner, she had learnt orthography, was agreeable, pretty, chaste

and modest; and it seemed to me that M. de la Popelinière must have regretted her.

We returned to Paris in the beginning of October. I parted from M. de la Popelinière with regret, for I had conceived for him a sincere attachment. We went to lodge in the Rue Neuve St. Paul. We had very agreeable neighbours, the family of M. Le Fèvre, a very rich Creole, who lived on the Quai des Celestins, and who had four daughters, of whom the youngest was of my own age. They were amiable, good tempered, pretty, and full of talents; we had some music every day; I passed almost the whole of the day with them, part of which time I passed in singing or in playing on the harp, the guitar, and the harpsichord. I thus acquired a profound knowledge of music. I had an Italian singing-master, called Pellegrini, who came at six in the morning to give me my lessons, which I received by candle-light. Philidor* taught me the science of accompaniment. In the middle of winter, I took a fancy to learn the bagpipe; and I had such a talent for instrumental music, that in less than two months I played as

* The real name of Philidor was Danican; he was born in 1726, and died in 1795, at London, whither he fled during the revolution. Though an excellent musician, he is as well known by his talent for chess, and his rules for that game, as by his operas.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

well as my teacher. M. de Zimmermann, whom we saw daily, next taught me to play on the violin, in which I succeeded equally well. Still, however, I was fonder of the harp than any other instrument, and practised at least five hours a day. Gaiffre, after forty-two lessons, would no longer accept payment; but he still came through friendship, and taught me to decypher my notes. I had entirely reformed his fingering; he used to make running chords with one finger, sliding it along all the strings, as some persons still do; a practice which destroys both fineness and firmness of touch, and is as ridiculous as it would be to finger the piano so. Gaiffre could not make cadences, and I could do so with great facility. At last I bethought myself of employing the little finger of the right hand in the arpeggios. I practised with the left hand separately, and made it perform all the movements of the right. As there was no engraved music for the harp, except some trash by Gaiffre, I began to play pieces for the harpsichord, and I soon advanced to the most difficult of Mondonville's and Rameau's, and from them to Scarlati, Alberti, Handel, &c. Encouraged by the strong admiration of Gaiffre, I made astonishing progress; I was visited and listened to as a prodigy, and every one wished to learn the harp; Gaiffre was the only teacher of it, and at last his scholars became too numerous for his attendance. I had the great

pleasure of being the cause of making the fortune of this worthy man, who was as grateful to me as if I had learnt the harp for no other purpose. My love for the instrument, and my ardour increased with my success. Towards the end of the winter, I played at least seven hours every day, very often eight or nine, and sometimes even ten or twelve. This rage for study lasted more than a year; at the end of which time, from playing eighteen months, without counting my trifling studies at Passy, I was really a performer of the first order, and had reached a pitch of perfection as yet unknown upon that instrument.

My father, who had remained in Burgundy, returned for a short time, and afterwards left us for St. Domingo, where he hoped to re-establish his fortune. This long voyage afflicted me extremely, and I found no consolation but in my harp. I was but fourteen years and a half old when I made a strange conquest; it was that of Baron du Zurlauben, colonel in the Swiss guards; he was eighty years of age, and became so enamoured of me, that he proposed to marry me; but I declared, in spite of my timidity, that nothing in the world would ever induce me to accept an old man for my husband. A short time afterwards, M. de Monville became a widower; as soon as he was out of mourning, he came to pay us a visit, which he repeated often.

Though so young, I was very soon sensible of the sentiments he felt for me. He was young, and could not then be more than twenty-six or twenty-eight; he was handsome, and of a noble and romantic style of manly beauty, which was infinitely to my taste; his manners were full of grace, he possessed many charming accomplishments, his talents were agreeable, and his character amiable; and, joined to all this, he had a large fortune. He was the only man of that age whom I had remarked or thought remarkable; but I was determined to marry no one but a man of quality, and belonging to the court. I should have preferred M. de la Popelinière, a farmer-general, and an old man, to every other; but this old gentleman had gained all my admiration, and I only saw in M. de Monville an amiable man. Since I had lost Mademoiselle de Mars, vanity had become the ruling motive of all my actions. My heart and my reason were so little cultivated, and I received so many praises on frivolous occasions, that I had acquired a kind of childish self-love, which led me to attach a prodigious importance to all those ornamental talents which could give celebrity. I really loved music and the harp; but I should never have given so much and such constant study to an instrument, except to enjoy the secret pleasure of being looked upon as a prodigy, and of seeing the most celebrated musicians

come and listen to my voice and my harp with admiration. Pellegrini dedicated to me a musical work of his own composition; and when I saw my name engraved at the head of a letter filled with flattery, my joy was unbounded, and I showed it, without affectation, to every one. I have never been guilty of any dissimulation but the affectation of courage; I have succeeded in concealing my griefs, but I have never disguised my sentiments or my opinions. From hence it has resulted, that though all my resolution and self-command have not endowed me with prudence, the frankness and ingenuousness of my character have not rendered it too yielding.

I was exceedingly flattered to hear that a *savant*, a geometrician of the highest reputation, had a passionate desire to hear me play on the harp: he had written, it is true, some work upon harmony—it was D'Alembert. He was introduced to my mother, and appeared enchanted with my execution. He had a vulgar expression of face, and was fond of telling low and ludicrous anecdotes, in a sharp and shrill tone of voice: I disliked him extremely. At this time I frequently saw the famous Rameau,* for whom I felt

* Jean Philippe Rameau was born in 1683, and received a patent of nobility in 1764, which through avarice he refused to register. He died the same year. He was the composer of twenty grand operas, and the author of two works on music.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

a great veneration. But I have forgotten to mention a very remarkable personage whom I saw almost every day for more than six months before the departure of my father: this was the famous charlatan the Count of Saint Germain. He had then the appearance of not more than forty-five years old, though by the testimony of people who had seen him thirty or thirty-five years before, it appears certain that he was a great deal older: he was somewhat below the middle size, well made, and active in his gait; his hair was black, his complexion dark, his face expressive of talent, and his features regular. He spoke French elegantly and without any accent, and likewise the English, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. He was an excellent musician, and could accompany any song on the harpsichord extempore, and with a perfection which astonished Philidor, as much as his style of preluding. He was well acquainted with physics, and was a very great chemist. My father, who was well qualified to judge, was a great admirer of his abilities in this way. He painted in oil colours, not, as has been said, in the finest style, but very well: he had discovered a secret respecting colours, which was really wonderful, and which gave an extraordinary effect to his pictures: he painted historical subjects in the grand style, and never failed to ornament the draperies of his women with precious stones: he then employed his colours

in painting these ornaments, and his emeralds, sapphires, rubies, &c. had all the brightness and the glancing brilliancy of the precious stones they imitated. Latour, Vonloo, and other painters, went to see these paintings, and admired extremely the surprising effect of these dazzling colours, which however had the disagreeable effect not only of throwing the figure into shade, but of destroying by their truth all the illusion of the picture. Notwithstanding, in the ornamental style, these colours might have been happily employed; but M. de Saint Germain never would consent to give up the secret. M. de Saint Germain's conversation was amusing and instructive; he had travelled much, and he knew all the details of modern history with such precision, that he has been said to have spoken of the oldest persons as if he had lived among them; but I have never heard him speak in this way. He seemed to have the best principles: he fulfilled all the external duties of religion, he was extremely charitable, and all agreed in allowing that his morals were perfectly pure. All was grave and moral in his behaviour and his discourse; yet it must be confessed that this man, so singular for his talents and the extent of his knowledge, and for all that can secure personal consideration—learning, elegant and imposing manners, exemplary behaviour, riches and beneficence—this man was nevertheless an impostor, or at all

events a person who had made himself eminent by the possession of some secrets, known only to himself, which had unquestionably procured him a robuster health and longer life than are usually allotted to man. I confess I am persuaded, and my father believed it firmly, that M. de Saint Germain, who seemed not above forty-five, was in reality at least ninety. If men did not abuse all the gifts of nature, they would generally reach a much greater age, of which we still see some examples; if they did not yield to their passions, and their intemperance, the age of man would be perhaps a hundred, and a very old age a hundred and fifty or a hundred and sixty. In this case at ninety a man would have the vigour of one of forty-five or fifty: my supposition therefore with regard to M. de Saint Germain is by no means unreasonable, if we admit farther, that he had discovered, by means of chemistry, the composition of some potion peculiarly adapted to his constitution; and we may suppose also, without believing in the philosopher's stone, that he was much older than the age which I have assigned him. M. de Saint Germain, during the first four months of our acquaintance, not only never spoke extravagantly, but never even uttered a single uncommon phrase; and he had something so grave and so respectable in his demeanour and appearance, that my mother never durst venture to question him

relative to the singularities ascribed to him. At last, one evening after he had accompanied me by ear in several Italian airs, he told me that in four or five years I should have a fine voice, adding, "And when you are seventeen or eighteen, should you not be glad to stop at that age for at least a number of years?" I replied that I should be charmed to do so. "Well," said he, "I promise you it shall be so:" and immediately he changed the conversation.

These few words encouraged my mother, who, an instant afterwards, asked him if Germany was really his native country. He shook his head with a mysterious air, and heaving a deep sigh, "All that I can tell you of my birth," replied he, "is, that at seven years old I was wandering about the woods with my governor, and that a reward was set upon my head!" These words made me shudder, for I never doubted the sincerity of this important communication.... "The evening before my flight," continued he, "my mother, whom I was never more to behold .... fastened her portrait upon my arm." .... "Oh heaven!" cried I, upon hearing this exclamation. M. de Saint Germain looked at me, and seemed to be touched on seeing my eyes filled with tears. "I will show it you," he continued, and at these words he bared his arm, and undid a bracelet admirably painted in enamel, and representing a very handsome woman. I contemplated this portrait with the most

lively emotion. M. de Saint Germain said no more, and changed the conversation. When he was gone, I was extremely grieved to hear my mother ridicule *his proscription,* and *the queen his mother;* for *the price put upon his head at the age of seven,* and his flight into the woods *with his governor,* all led us to believe him the son of a dethroned sovereign. I believed, and I wished to believe, a romance of so extraordinary a kind, so that the pleasantries of my mother on the subject shocked me extremely. After that day M. de Saint Germain said nothing remarkable in this way: he spoke only of music, of the arts, and of the curious things he had observed in his travels. He gave me perpetually excellent sweetmeats in the shape of fruits, which he assured me he made himself: and of all his talents this was not the one I esteemed the least. He gave me also a box for bonbons of a singular kind, of which he had himself made the lid. The box was of tortoise-shell, and very large; the top was ornamented with an agate in composition, much smaller than the lid. On placing the box before the fire a moment, the agate was no longer seen, but in its place was a pretty miniature, representing a shepherdess holding a basket of flowers: the figure remained until the heat was again applied to the box, and then the agate re-appeared and hid it as before. This would be a pretty method of concealing a portrait. I have since invented a composition with which I can make

a perfect imitation of all sorts of pebbles, and even of transparent agates; that invention has led me to guess at the artifice of M. de Saint Germain's box.

To finish what relates to this extraordinary person, I must add, that fifteen or sixteen years after, in a journey to Sienna in Italy, I learnt that he had lived in that city, and that he was not believed to be more than fifty years of age. Sixteen or seventeen years after that, being at Holstein, I learnt from the Prince of Hesse, brother-in-law of the King of Denmark, and father-in-law of the Prince Royal, now on the throne, that M. de Saint Germain had died in his palace six months before my arrival in the country. The prince had the politeness to answer all my questions relative to this remarkable personage; he said that he had neither the appearance of infirmity nor old age at the time of his death, but that he appeared to be worn away by some insurmountable grief. The prince had given him apartments in his palace, and made chemical experiments with him. M. de Saint Germain had arrived in Holstein without any appearance of poverty, but without attendants and without any show of splendour. He had still preserved some fine diamonds. He died of consumption, and was seized before dying with unspeakable terrors, which even affected his reason, which two months before his death was completely disordered; and every part of his conduct proved

him to be suffering all the fearful agonies of a troubled conscience. I was exceedingly grieved at this recital, for I had always preserved a strong interest in this singular personage.

As soon as my father had sailed for St. Domingo, my mother began seriously to recommence and to follow up the most distressing of affairs—a law-suit against her mother! That mother, however, was one of the most unnatural in existence. The Marchioness de la Haie, my grandmother, was first married to M. de Mézières, who had an estate in Burgundy, near Avallon. M. de Mézières had much talent, and was an excellent geometrician. It is a fact well known in the province, that M. de Mézières, who was a neighbour of the celebrated Madame du Châtelet, cultivated her taste for geometry, and furnished her with all the materials for the works she afterwards published. It is singular enough that my grandfather should have been the person who thus contributed to establish the reputation of the greatest of Voltaire's admirers!

My grandmother became a widow; she was still young, and very handsome. She had had two children by her marriage with M. de Mézières, a boy and a girl, (afterwards my mother,) the one aged eight or nine, and the other six. She placed the girl in a convent, at the Abbey of Malnoue, near Paris, and the boy at college; and remarried before the year

of widowhood was quite expired. Her second husband was the Marquis de la Haie, called *the handsome la Haie:* he was first the page, and afterwards the lover of the Duchess de Berri, daughter of the Regent, and very rich. Madame de la Haie conceived a violent dislike to the children of the first marriage; she told the abbess of Malnoue that she intended her daughter for a convent, and enjoined her to bring her up in that persuasion. As soon as M. de Mézières had attained his thirteenth year, she sent him off as *incorrigible* to America. This lad nevertheless turned out a distinguished character, equally eminent for his talents, his genius, his courage, and his virtues. On his arrival in North America he made his escape, and concealed himself in Canada among the savages; he was not then fourteen. He made them understand that he was abandoned by his parents, and wished to live among them; they consented, on condition that he would undergo the operation of *tattooing,* that is to say, that he should suffer the whole of his body to be painted in their fashion with the juice of herbs—a very painful operation, which he sustained with a courage which delighted the savages. He had a prodigious memory and a vigorous constitution; very soon he acquired their language and excelled in all their exercises. In order to retain what he had learnt, (for he had been an admirable scholar for his

age, and gained all the prizes in his class,) he used to trace daily on the bark of trees, passages of Latin and French poetry, and geometrical figures. He had formed a great collection of these pieces of bark, which he preserved with the utmost care: he acquired the highest respect among the savages, and before the age of twenty he was elected their chief by unanimous proclamation. The savages declared war on the Spaniards. My uncle taught them improved modes of warfare, and under his command they gained advantages over the Spaniards which astonished the latter, who were surprised to find such extraordinary talents in a chief of savages. They proposed peace; my uncle was sent to negotiate it; and he completed the astonishment of the Spaniards by speaking to them in Latin. They put some questions to this singular savage; and touched with his narrative, and charmed with the talents and genius he displayed, they offered to attach him to the Spanish service, to which he consented, on condition of their making peace with the savages. When the peace was concluded he made his escape, and passed into the service of Spain, where he conducted himself so admirably, that he made a rich marriage, and in ten or twelve years was appointed Governor of Louisiana. He bought some fine plantations, purchased a splendid library, and lived there perfectly happy. Afterwards he made a voyage to

France, where he found that his cruel mother no longer existed. I was then at the Palais Royal, where he came almost every day to dine with me: he had a grave and melancholy air; his talents were great, and his conversation of the highest interest. Besides the extraordinary things he had witnessed, he had read extensively,* and his memory was astonishing. The serpents painted by the savages upon his legs might be seen through his silk stockings, so deeply were they engraved. He showed me his breast, which was covered in the same manner with large painted flowers, of which the colours were very vivid. I felt great admiration and tenderness for this singular and excellent person. He answered all my questions briefly, but with exceeding mildness. I have never known any one who said so much in so few words. He had preserved a tender remembrance of the savages, and even of their way of life. He told me one thing which surprised me; he said that the generality of travellers, who have spoken of the savages in detail, have (in spite of a little exaggeration) estimated their character tolerably well; and though perfectly ignorant of their language, they have made them speak pretty nearly as they actually do. "The reason is plain," added my uncle; "if we judged the Europeans from their professions and

* In the Latin, French, and Spanish authors.—*(Note by the Author.)*

their outward show, we should be much mistaken; but there is no deception in judging of savages; their gestures, features and actions express what they are, and what they feel." Yet in spite of my uncle's remark, as metaphysical ideas are not represented in this manner, a great many of the speeches which travellers attribute to the savages, must necessarily be ridiculous. My uncle gave me a short notice on the savages, which he wrote at my request, and I inserted it six or seven years after in my *Annals of Virtue*, acknowledging the author from whom I received it. This part of the work on its appearance was much spoken of; and the only fault found with it was, that it was not longer. I did not change a single word in it. His manner of writing is very remarkable for a man who had been exiled from infancy, and who had passed fifteen years among the savages. My mother made always a third party in our conversations, and as she led them, I was generally obliged to be no more than a listener. I had thus an admirable opportunity for informing myself with certainty of many curious things of which the knowledge would have been most useful in the prosecution of my favourite study—the human heart; but I regret that I profited but superficially by the occasion. Nevertheless as I am about to publish in a few months a collection of novels, I shall write one called *The European Savage*, in which I shall insert

all my uncle told me, and the rest I shall endeavour to supply from my own imagination.*

To return to the history of my mother. She was placed in the convent at six years of age, and brought up in the conviction that she was intended by her mother for a nun. The abbess of her convent, Madame Rossignol, was a woman of great talent; she became extremely attached to my mother, and took the greatest pains with her education. Her board was paid annually, but no masters allowed her. The abbess had her taught music, to sing motetts, and to play on the organ; she dined with the abbess, and passed the whole day with her. In the abbess's parlour she often saw the poet Fuzelier,† who used to recite pretty pieces of his own composition, which inspired my mother with a wish to write verses. Her first attempt was a kind of hymn in honour of St. Cecilia: the abbess was delighted with it, and showed it to Fuzelier, who gave my mother some rules for versification; with which, however, she was never well acquainted—a thing much to be regretted, as she showed a great talent for poetry. The very day on which she attained her fourteenth year, she was

* I have never had time to write this novel, which might have been made very striking.—(*Note by the Author.*)

† Louis Fuzelier, born in 1672, died in 1752, was the author of many dramatic pieces.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

made to take the veil. Her mother never came to see her but once in six months at most; and Mademoiselle de Mézières, who had never received from her mother a single mark of affection, durst neither speak nor raise her eyes in her presence, but was forced to listen in silence while Madame de la Haie poured forth common places about the dangers of the world, and the delights of the convent. She had scarcely reached her sixteenth year, when Madame de la Haie informed her that she must take the vows, and devote herself irrevocably to the cloister: my mother wept, but in vain, and a day in the month following, was fixed for the ceremony. When the day arrived, my mother declared firmly, that though she might be dragged to the church, she would there, instead of pronouncing the irrevocable *yes*, say *no!* The abbess assured Madame de la Haie, that she would certainly fulfil her threat, for that she had been remarkable from her infancy for decision of character, and that all violence that might be employed, would only serve to disgust and offend the public. Madame de la Haie was furious, but she was compelled to yield. My mother reassumed that very day her ordinary dress, which she had put off two years before: as she had grown much during her fruitless noviciate, her clothes were become ridiculously short, but this did not lessen the pleasure she had in once more wearing them. She was left in the convent, and never re-

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moved by her mother; she became a delightful woman, equally remarkable for her beauty, talents, and understanding. She was beloved by all who knew her, except her mother, who showed openly the most unjust and unnatural aversion for her daughter. My mother remained in the convent till the age of twenty-six years and six months; when she became very intimate with the Marchioness of Fontenille, a widow, who had retired to the convent. The marchioness was a relation of my father, who often used to visit her in the parlour; he there saw Mademoiselle de Mézières, of whom he became enamoured, and proposed marriage. Madame de la Haie with an unaccountable malignity, withheld her consent for three months. Yet my mother could not have expected a more suitable match: her portion was only forty or forty-five thousand francs, and she had met with a gentleman of good family, thirty-seven years of age, agreeable, full of talent, and extremely handsome, and who had moreover ten or twelve thousand francs a year. Madame de la Haie gave neither portion, nor marriage presents, nor outfit; the good abbess was at the expense of the nuptials. My mother was married in the church of the convent; Madame de la Haie came nevertheless to the nuptial mass, with her two children by the second marriage, a son of eleven, and a daughter of eight years and six months, afterwards Madame de Montesson. My mother went imme-

diately into Burgundy, to her estate of Champcéry, where I was born fifteen months after her marriage.

My mother had, at different times, fruitlessly demanded her portion, that is to say, the portion which was due to her from her father's property; but had never been able to obtain more than a small part, and that by means of many importunities; at the period of her ruin, she became more pressing; and at last after the departure of my father for St. Domingo, she determined to commence a suit. She wrote herself a memorial, which, before printing and commencing the lawsuit, she caused her advocate to communicate to Madame de la Haie. This memorial, though temperate in language, was overwhelming by its facts. Madame de la Haie felt this, and sent her son the Marquis de la Haie, to my mother, to accomplish an arrangement between his sister and Madame de la Haie. The Marquis, without being naturally deformed or stupid, was neither handsome nor clever; but he was possessed of goodness and feeling. He had never till then seen me; he looked at me often, and with much tenderness, and displayed the greatest interest in my fate. All at once he proposed to take us to Madame de la Haie's, adding, that on seeing us, every thing would be amicably arranged.

He pressed my mother so much, that at last she consented; he seated us in his carriage, and first

conducted us to the house of Madame de Montesson, who came to pay us a visit on our first arrival at Paris, but never afterwards returned. Madame de Montesson was at home; my uncle led us into her apartment; she was not dressed, and did not expect us, and appeared more embarrassed than touched at our visit. However, she said that she approved the idea of my uncle; that she would go and dress, and then accompany us. I found in her neither the cordiality nor the good nature of my uncle. She was a long time in dressing; it seemed to me that on such an occasion she should have dressed somewhat more quickly. My uncle repeatedly called her attention to me; every minute he said to her, as he looked at me, "How pretty she is! how interesting!" Madame de Montesson said nothing, but hung down her head with a sigh, and affected an air of tenderness. At last when she was dressed, she gave my mother her arm, and passed on before us; my uncle took me affectionately by the hand, and perceiving that I trembled, he tried to give me confidence by speaking to me in the kindest and tenderest manner. We got into the carriage, and drove to the Rue Cassette, where my grandmother lived. I saw that my mother was much agitated, which shocked me greatly; it seemed to me strange, that one for whom I felt so much respect, should fear any human being! Besides, I had heard such terrible things of my grand-

mother, that even the voice of blood did not bias me in her favour. On entering her house, my uncle and my aunt left us in a cabinet, and went to notify to her our arrival, and in a quarter of an hour they returned with my grand-aunt Madame Dessaleux, my grandmother's sister. My two aunts gave my mother their arms, assuring her that she would be well received; my uncle led me into my grandmother's room. On entering, I felt the blood freeze in my veins, and her countenance completely chilled me. I had been told that she was still handsome; to me she appeared merely terrible. She was very tall and upright, and in her whole expression there was something haughty and imperious which I had never seen in any other person: there were still remains of beauty in her features, but she wore much red and white, and her physiognomy was at once rigid, cold, and harsh; it frightened me. My mother ran to throw herself at her feet; and I burst into tears. My grandmother raised her but without embracing her, which provoked me. My uncle, who still held me by the hand, presented me to my grandmother, saying, "Mother, look at this charming little girl!" and adding in a lower tone, "Kiss her, mother!" My grandmother looked at me with a gloomy and fixed gaze, which made me cast down my eyes; my uncle told me to kiss her hand; I obeyed, though in trembling; she kissed my forehead, and I ran sobbing

to throw myself into my mother's arms. Madame de la Haie rung, and demanded a glass of water immediately, when Madame de Montesson and Madame Dessaleux pretended to believe that she was about to faint, though there was not the slightest change on her immoveable and painted features: Madame de Montesson busied herself about her mother with the inclination of the head, the half-shut eyes, and all the other airs she assumed on touching occasions, which gave her the most hypocritical appearance possible. When Madame de la Haie had drank, and drawn three or four sighs, my uncle spoke with great feeling in favour of my mother; and Madame de Montesson said a few words to the same effect. Madame de la Haie replied at first by reproaches, but afterwards she became calmer, and spoke to my mother in an affectionate tone; she added, that my mother might trust to her, and withdraw proceedings; and that she would lose nothing by giving that proof of respect; my mother was touched, and promised all that was asked; she was then embraced, I might even say, *caressed*. They parted completely reconciled. I saw that my mother was happy—and the secret joy I felt amounted to transport. My mother, with a confidence and a generosity truly touching, sent immediately for her lawyers, and signed an agreement to withdraw her plea, which she sent the very same day to Madame de la Haie. My uncle

came again to visit us, and testified more interest in me than ever; he was a worthy and honest man, and of the most perfect sincerity; but he left us about this time for the army, and was killed at the battle of Minden.

His loss was a severe one for me; for I am sure I should have always found in him a kind relative, and a zealous protector, and that if he had lived, the conduct of Madame de la Haie would have been widely different. After his departure, we went several times to my grandmother's house without being admitted. At last came the news of my uncle's death; and the grief of Madame de la Haie on the occasion naturally suspended all thoughts of business; but when the first burst of sorrow had subsided, and my mother renewed her solicitations, she received only dry and vague answers; she urged them more strongly, and her letters remained unanswered; she insisted, she wrote repeatedly, and at last she was told that she had no right to any thing, as she had herself acknowledged, by withdrawing her claim. This blow was ill to bear; our lawyers were enraged at this base and flagrant act of injustice, and even those of Madame de la Haie were shocked at it. As for myself, I was so surprised and indignant, that I became ill in consequence; I had no words to express what I felt; and I am sure that if by chance I had met Madame de la Haie I should have fainted; I

could not think of her without shuddering, and I do not remember ever to have experienced through the remainder of my life a more painful and violent emotion. My mother on this occasion uttered the following noble sentiment: "My consolation is, my child, that I have given you a good example, both of a generous confidence and perfect filial duty." I could only reply by my tears; and from this time we never again saw either my grandmother or my aunt.

About this period there was an anecdote so universally repeated and believed in the great world that I cannot here omit it. After the death of the Marquis de la Haie, killed at Minden as I have already stated, the Duke of Burgundy, eldest son of the Dauphin, then twelve years old, and dying of some unknown distemper, displayed great regret at the death of my uncle (who had been his *gentilhomme de la manche**) and to whom he was extremely attached. The Duke of Burgundy added, "It was M. de la Haie who was the cause of my illness, but I had promised not to mention it." The young prince on

* The place of *gentilhomme de la manche*, (literally, gentleman of the sleeve,) about the person of the presumptive heir to the crown, was given only to young gentlemen about the court distinguished for their birth and good character. It was suppressed after the death of the Duke of Burgundy, or at least the title was changed. The *menins* of Monseigneur the Dauphin (afterwards Louis XVI.) were the same officers. *(Note by the Author.)*

being interrogated, confessed that one day being alone with M. de la Haie, the latter would place him upon a rocking-horse, and had let him fall with great violence; and my uncle perceiving no wound or fracture of any kind, and believing there was no danger, entreated the prince not to mention the circumstance. From this time the prince became ill, and wore away, while the physicians were unable to discover the cause of his malady. He had an abscess in his body. The young prince died: he gave promise of a noble disposition, great talent, and sensibility: if he had survived the unhappy Louis XVI would never have been king, which would of course have given another direction to the course of events. Thus a child's plaything—a rocking-horse, changed the destiny of France and that of all Europe !*

I was fifteen when we went in April to Chevilly, near Paris, belonging to M. and Madame de Joui.† M. de Joui, the father of Madame d'Esparbès, (who is still living and was then twenty-two years of age,) belonged to the courts, and was sprung from a family which had been in the finances. He was the son of a Madame Thoinard, famous for her riches and her avarice, was very extravagant, and owed enormous

* There would have been other ministers, other agents of government, &c. &c.—(*Note by the Author.*)

† This family is not the same with that of M. de Jouy of the French Academy.—(*Note by the Author.*)

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sums; but he kept a splendid establishment, and nobody suspected the bad state of his affairs. He was not without talent, but he wanted judgment; he was agreeable and pleasant in society, but we had little of his company, for he was almost always at Paris. Madame de Joui was, and had always been, an angel: I have never found more sincere piety, more perfect goodness, or a more amiable and more accomplished character. She was forty but still handsome, her manners were full of gentleness and elegance, and the sound of her voice went directly to the heart. She adored her husband; and though she knew his faults, she never appeared to suspect him of any. Chevilly was a charming spot, and unlike every other. The house was merely a *ferme ornée*, but convenient and delightful to inhabit. It was situated between a large court and a delicious grove, especially in spring when it was completely carpeted with double violets and lilies of the valley. I shall never forget the pleasure I had in gathering flowers all the spring in this fragrant place, to make nosegays every morning for Madame de Joui..... There was in the wing of the house, called *The Farm*, a dairy; it was newly-built and splendid, adorned with mother of pearl, and white marble, and vases in porcelain. Here there was always to be found plenty of excellent cream. The garden of Chevilly consisted, I think, of forty acres; it was entirely

planted with fruit trees; it was square, and surrounded by four high terraces; each terrace was bordered with beautiful rose-trees, sloping down towards the garden, and terminated by green arbour-work, below which was a garland of strawberry plants, encircling the garden: on the other side of the terrace was a breast wall, over which there was a view of the surrounding country, and beyond the wall there was a deep moat, the approach to which was defended by iron spikes. At the end of each terrace there was a little stone pavilion, consisting of a pretty saloon, over which was a terrace in the Italian taste, to which you mounted by a little staircase. In the midst of this magnificent orchard there stood a large pavilion also built of stone, and of elegant construction. The interior was composed of a very handsome saloon on the ground floor, five steps from the garden, to which you entered by a large glass door; the floor was of white marble, and the walls painted with landscapes in *fresco;* it was superbly furnished, and all the chairs were covered with cloth of silver. Over this superb saloon were three pretty rooms, which formed our residence Shrubs and flowers surrounded the pavilion, except where a space was left opposite the glass door, to leave the entrance open. Thus we lived amidst fruits and flowers of all kinds. Very often parties came

to take ices or collations in the saloon, and on such occasions I was charged with doing the honours. In this place I have often received the old Maréchale de Villars, then eighty-three, the widow of the great Villars, whom she had married at fifteen: she was the handsomest and most majestic old woman I have ever beheld. I forgot to mention that on one of the sides of the court were immense aviaries filled with the rarest fowls of all kinds; the most useful of collections, for they produced excellent eggs. Beyond one of the sides of the garden there were vast poultry yards. I have since seen in France, in England, in Germany, and in Italy many superb houses, but none so much to my taste as this one. M. de Joui, the *creator*, as it were, of this garden, had spent treasures in its decoration; but at least there was a simplicity of good taste about all this profusion which distinguished it from the mere luxury of a financier. It would seem as if we might hope to be free from the hazard of ruin, when disdaining all the expensive trifles of a vulgar splendour, we love to be surrounded only with the riches offered by the hand of nature—with flowers, and fruits, and domestic animals: but it must be confessed that many other tastes far less innocent, contributed infinitely more to the ruin of M. de Joui's fortune than the farm and the garden of Chevilly.

An adventure which happened to me at Chantilly, and which did much credit to my courage, I shall here relate.

One evening, when a large party had arrived from Paris, I was requested to play upon the harp: I sent to the pavilion for my instrument, which was brought to me, but without the key: in place of sending a second time, I lighted my little paper lantern, and ran to the pavilion: it was late, and I knew that neither my mother's man servant nor her waiting maid were there, for they left us in the morning when their work was done, and did not return till the time we were about to go to bed, except two or three hours in the day that the waiting maid passed with me during my studies. We were all the rest of the time at the farm, separated from the pavilion by a large court, and a great part of the garden. I ran to the pavilion; as I approached it I observed on the sand a train of marks as black as ink; I paid no attention to this, but on reaching the door of the pavilion, and mounting the steps, I saw with surprise that the door was ajar, and that two panes of glass were broken. On entering the saloon, I perceived every thing in disorder: all the chairs were overturned, and I saw upon the white marble floor the same stains I had witnessed upon the sand and the steps, and which I had supposed to be water, which in the dark always looks black; I stooped

down, holding my little lantern to the ground, and discovered with horror that the stains were of blood, from which I readily guessed that all the others I had seen were marks of blood also. Seized with alarm, I was persuaded that murder had been committed in the pavilion, and that the assassins had taken flight. My first movement was to make my escape; but I thought it would be more glorious for me to carry off my key, and I immediately determined to do so. I passed through the saloon like lightning without looking round me. I went up stairs, and passed into my mother's room, trembling lest I should find a corpse there. I entered my own cabinet, and seized my key, which seemed to me a treasure of glory; and immediately with more joy at my exploit than terror at the adventure, I ran down stairs, and happy to find myself clear of the pavilion, I flew rapidly across the garden and the court, and at last reaching the farm, I ran up stairs into the room, and holding up the key of my harp in my hand as a trophy, I cried out "Here it is!" At these words I sank into a chair, pale as death and scarcely alive. The company gathered round me, and in reply to their questions, I related my adventure. It produced a great effect, and my courage was extolled to the skies, especially by the men, for the women somewhat blamed my temerity; and they were in the right—for such a pride, though it would have been a virtue in a man,

was folly in a woman; and without that vestige of childishness which remains even at fifteen, and which I had even in a greater degree than others, my folly would have been without grace. Afterwards all the gentlemen arming themselves, ordered torches to be lighted, and entered the pavilion. They found I had exaggerated nothing; they saw the marks of blood, the broken windows, the saloon stained with blood throughout, and in great abundance. All their search however gave them no further light on the subject. On quitting the pavilion, they found two lines of blood which ran one from the other; following that which did not lead to the pavilion, it led them towards the poultry yard, of which, in spite of the rigorous prohibition of the master of the house, the door was open; and still pursuing the traces of blood, they arrived at a hogsty in which a sow had just farrowed! The sow, which had made its escape in that condition, had run about the garden, leaving here and there traces of blood, of which several were broken by her runnings to and fro. The animal finding the door of the pavilion unfastened, had opened it by pushing against it, and had cut itself about the head in breaking the panes; and entering the saloon, it had overturned the furniture, and inundated the floor with blood, and then regained its cabin. Such was the conclusion of this famous ad-

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venture, which made a great noise among the friends of Madame de Joui.

I passed all this summer in a way very agreeable to my taste. M. and Madame de Joui had two children, a boy brought up with them called M. Thoinard, who was then fourteen; he was handsome, serious, studious, and passed almost the whole of the day shut up with his tutor; he has since fallen in Corsica; the other was the Countess d'Esparbès, then twenty-two, and who is living at the moment I write this; she was very little, very short-sighted, with dull blue eyes, and a nose somewhat irregular; she was red-haired, and very pretty, though her physiognomy was not agreeable, but she had a beautiful skin, a fine mouth and teeth, and lovely hands. In speaking of these pretty hands, I recollect to have heard her relate, that, at supper in the king's private apartments, she was ordered to peel cherries for Louis XV. who always ate them in this manner, dipping them in sugar. Madame de Joui said one day to my mother, in my presence, that the dazzling whiteness of the hands of Madame d'Esparbès cost her dear, for that she often caused herself to be bled without any necessity, merely to preserve their beauty; yet the whiteness of her skin was not at all like paleness. She came from time to time to pass two or three days at Chevilly; she was gay, graceful, and amiable.

Madame d'Amblimon and Madame d'Esparbès, were then the favourites at court of Madame de Pompadour, who gave them in private strange titles of friendship; she called the one *Dishclout* and the other *Slut*. This was not the fashion among the mistresses of Louis XIV.

Our residence at Chevilly was terminated by a very distressing scene. The creditors of M. de Joui, in concert with his family, who wished to save what remained of his fortune, obtained *a lettre de cachet*, to imprison him at Pierre Encise, where he remained several years. Nothing could exceed the grief of Madame de Joui, his interesting and virtuous wife. M. de Joui was arrested and carried off at six o'clock in the morning, without having the least suspicion that his arrest was contemplated, even the night before. Madame de Joui, after his departure, received visits from her daughter and some of her relations; but their visits were very short, and none of these persons returned during the short time we afterwards remained at Chevilly. We never left Madame de Joui for three days and three nights; during which she remained in a frightful state; and at my urgent request, I was permitted to pass all that time with her, without once going to bed. These were the first waking nights I had passed in my life, and they were dedicated to pity and friendship. During these sleepless nights and melancholy days,

Madame de Joui often fainted, and wept without ceasing; she made me read pious books to her, and often she pressed our hands, and embraced us in silence. She never spoke, but from time to time to entreat that we should retire to rest; and on our refusal she would embrace us with an agonizing expression of features. The fourth day we took some repose, and the following morning we went to church; we remained five or six days longer at Chevilly, and then departed for Paris. Madame de Joui hastily settled some affairs, and after having bid us the most tender farewell, she went to Lyons, in order to be near her unfortunate husband.

My mother hired a small house in the Rue d'Aguesseau, where she received several men of letters, among whom was Sainte Foix, author of the Essays on Paris, of the pretty Comedy of the Oracle, and several other dramatic pieces: his appearance and manners contrasted strangely with the elegance of these agreeable productions; he had a bluntness and vulgarity in his tone, a hideous face, and a coarse and sinister expression of features. A very witty actress (Mademoiselle Bryant) said of him and M. Bertin the poet, who had a long pale face, dropped jaws, hollow eyes, and a gloomy gaze, that the one (Sainte Foix) resembled Guilt and the other Remorse. There could be nothing more characteristic than this, to those who had ever seen these two faces. But M.

Sainte Foix, though somewhat of a Hector, was at bottom a worthy and an honest man. Several artists came to visit my mother; Latour the painter, who spoke admirably upon his art; and Honavre, the most celebrated pianist of his time, who gave me several lessons on the harpsichord. He was at that time the only person who could perform a cadence with a bass executed with the same hand; I transposed it immediately for the harp, giving it the name of *Honavre's cadence*, and it was so much the more surprising, as nobody could then execute even simple cadences upon that instrument. Casimir has invented a difficulty which is far more surprising, and which he only can execute; he performs with the same hand which executes the cadence, simple and double trills with the third, fourth and little finger, with astonishing brilliancy, and the same with the left hand. Casimir, who has, as it were, new-created the harp, performs many other pieces of incredible difficulty on the piano; and he executes upon the harp without any change, the most elaborate pieces for the piano. We also saw at our house, Philidor, the composer, and celebrated chess-player; Gaviniès, the most famous violin player of the day, and Barthelmont, likewise an excellent performer on the violin, who accompanied me every day on the instrument, and contributed to perfect my style. He came gratui-

tously, and gave his instructions with a zeal and attachment which I have never forgotten. He went into England, where he had the good fortune, a few years afterwards, to become first violin to the queen; he was as remarkable for his virtues as his talents. The year following, I heard with admiration the famous Pugnani, one of whose greatest titles to celebrity, is his having been the master of Viotti, a musician formed to serve for ever as a model to all those who dedicate themselves to the fine arts, by his prodigious talent, his cultivated mind, his morals, the purity and nobleness of his conduct, and the qualities of his heart. In the midst of all this, I continued to practise music; besides the harp, on which I played six or seven hours a-day, I played on the harpsichord, the guitar, the mandolin, the viol, and the bagpipe, an instrument which was exceedingly graceful; the wind was produced (as I have said) not by the mouth, but through a small pair of bellows placed under the arm. With so much occupation, I had no time to cultivate my mind; but I repeated every week the odes of Rousseau and Gresset's verses, which, joined to the Dictionary of Fabulous History of Chompré, which I knew completely by heart, formed the whole of my reading. I had an extreme relish for poetry; from time to time I wrote verses and songs, which, however, I never showed to any one, and

which, indeed, I seldom even reduced to writing. I composed them in walking in our little garden, which was my greatest amusement.

My mother had renewed her intimacy with a friend at the convent, the Countess de Civrac, who was still extremely handsome, though no longer young, and who loaded me with kindness. We often went to sup with her: on these occasions, I constantly played on the harp. She was an enthusiastic admirer of my talent, and I dare not venture to repeat here the many foolish things which came into her head, when she saw me at my instrument. It was at her house that I heard Albanèze, the celebrated *soprano*, who was equally agreeable as a singer and a composer. Madame de Civrac introduced us to the Duchess d' Uzès, her sister, and to the Countess de Beuvron. I supped at some one of these houses three or four times a week, and played always on the harp. But, in spite of all the praises with which I was loaded, and in spite of my great youth and inexperience, an instinctive good taste, which was natural to me, made me feel that my mother was far too lavish of my singing and my playing. I was ill at ease in these brilliant parties, though I was excessively caressed. I discovered two things; first, that one ought not to enter into the great world but when one can be on a footing with others, as to dress, &c.; and secondly, that, if it had not been for my talents, these persons

would have had no wish to invite me. These ideas wounded my feelings, and bred in me a taste for solitude, and an excessive timidity which was long habitual to me.

My father, in returning from St. Domingo, was taken prisoner by the English, with all he possessed; he was conducted to Lanceston, a seaport town in England, where he found many French prisoners of war, and among others a young man whose handsome face, talents, and accomplishments, inspired him with the most lively interest; this was the Comte de Genlis, who, in returning from Pondicherry, where he had commanded a regiment during five years, had been carried into China, to Canton, where he passed five months, and afterwards to Lanceston.

The Comte de Genlis had served in the navy from the age of fourteen; he had covered himself with glory in the famous action of M. d'Aché, he was then a lieutenant, and scarcely twenty. Out of twenty-two officers, he was the only one who survived, all the others were killed. M. de Genlis was covered with wounds, of which one remained open for eight years and a half. This combat gained him the rank of captain and the cross of St. Louis. M. d'Aché took off his own to give it to him on board of the vessel the very day of the action, saying, that he was sure the court would not disavow what he had done. The Comte de Genlis conducted himself with equal

valour at Pondicherry. As soon as he returned to France, M. de Puisieux made him quit the navy and enter into the land service, with the rank of colonel of grenadiers.

While he was at Lanceston, he became very intimate, as I have already stated, with my father, who always carried a box, on which was my portrait, in the act of playing the harp; this picture struck M. de Genlis, who made many enquiries about me, and believed all that was said by a father, who believed me faultless. The English had left my father my portrait, my letters, and those of my mother, which spoke of nothing but my successes and my talents. The Count read these letters, and they made a profound impression upon him. He had an uncle, who was then minister for foreign affairs, (M. de Puisieux,) who soon obtained his liberty; and he promised to do all in his power to obtain that of my father. As soon as he arrived in Paris he waited on my mother, to deliver some letters from my father; at the same time he earnestly solicited his exchange, and in three weeks afterwards my father arrived at Paris.

A very short time after my father's arrival, I experienced the most profound grief I had ever yet felt. Want of money had obliged my father to give a promissory note. As the time of payment approached, not having the entire sum, my mother, in despair,

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had the courage to write to her sister, Madame de Montesson, to explain her situation, and to ask for six hundred francs. She received a note in reply, containing a dry and decided refusal! . . . I have read this *sisterly* epistle . . . My oppressed heart pardoned in the end this unworthy proceeding—but how many things have since occurred to recal it to my mind! My father was arrested, and carried to Fort L'Evêque . . . It would be impossible for me to give an idea of the excess of my anguish . . . My mother went next day to the prison, but she did not wish that I should accompany her; I conjured her, however, so strongly not to abandon me, and leave me alone with my affliction, that she permitted me to follow her. What a shock I felt in contemplating this sad abode! and how can I describe my sensations on entering the place where my father was confined! I ran and threw myself at his feet; I felt, in prostrating myself before him, as if I sought to make amends, by my respect and my tenderness, for the humiliation to which I saw him reduced; I kissed his feet, which I bathed with my tears; but he raised me up, saying that I added to his affliction, and weakened his courage. We returned to the prison, where we passed almost entire days during the time my father remained there—that is to say, a fortnight; after which the promissory note was paid, and my father regained his liberty. But

grief had stricken him with a mortal wound . . . he was weak, languishing, and sedentary, and refused to quit the house; his only pleasure was to hear me play on the harp and to converse with me. I asked him about St. Domingo, the slavery of the negroes, the beautiful productions of the country, his voyages, and his sojourn in England. His conversation was as full of talent as of information; I have never met with any person who has read and remembered so much. Each day he visibly grew weaker, though still in the flower of his age. At last a disease declared itself—a malignant fever, to which he fell a victim! I lost him, after watching and waking by him many nights, the sole consolation for such a misfortune; yet it is a consolation to have fulfilled this sacred duty. . . At this terrible moment a friend of my mother's gave her the use of an apartment in the convent of the *Filles du Précieux Sang*, in the Rue Cassette. We retired thither, and passed there four months and a half. To our great surprise, Madame de Montesson came to the parlour to pay us a visit of form; my mother received her very dryly, and I preserved towards her a chilling coldness of manner. She never returned. Madame de Montesson, in the midst of opulence, had refused her sister, in affliction and distress, six hundred francs! and yet she thought she could not dispense with paying her a formal visit of condolence. This

trait was characteristic of her; she never had the idea of a genuine sentiment; and she observed, in reality, no other obligations than those which custom and good breeding imposed.

At the Précieux Sang, I conceived a high veneration for the religious females of the austere orders, (those I allude to followed the rule, and practised all the austerities of the Carmelites,) as well as for their perfect piety, and their sanctity, which surpasses all I can say in its praise. They were happy, because entirely devoted to God; there were no little cabals among them, no envy, no evil reports; these angelic women were occupied only in praising God, in attending the sick of the house, and in working for the poor, for whom they made coverlids, clothes, and child-bed linen, and on Sundays, lint for the hospitals and the prisons. Several of the religious ladies became fond of me, among others, Mother Seraphina and Mother Veronica. I regarded them with peculiar veneration, as I thought, that, from their entrance in infancy into this convent, these pure lips had never uttered aught but the praises of the Deity, or the words of peace and charity; that their ears had never heard any thing offensive, and that "their industrious and ingenious hands," like those of Solomon's virtuous woman, had worked but for the infirm and the indigent.

Mother Veronica, who was afflicted with a com-

plaint in the chest, was informed by the physician that she had but three months to live. My mother had two large bottles of sirop of calibash, which my father had brought from St. Domingo; I procured one for Mother Veronica, and, to the great surprize of the physician, and all the nuns, I cured her radically in less than two months.

I have not hitherto spoken of an old friend of my father's, because I wished to bring together all I had to say concerning him. It was the Baron d'Andlau; he came often to visit us at the parlour; he was more than sixty, generous and kind. He discovered the greatest friendship for me, and I was so much the more touched with this, as I attributed these marks of affection to the remembrance he had preserved of my father; but at last he made me understand his real sentiments, by the most singular declaration of love which was ever made; he sent me, by his valet, a huge packet, containing his genealogy at full length, which he entreated me to examine with attention; but all my application in this way rendered me by no means favourable to his hopes. The same day he came solemnly to demand *my heart and my hand*, and was extremely surprised to find that his superb parchments had produced so little effect upon my mind. My mother, however, desired me to reflect upon his proposal, stating that he was rich and of high birth; but I persisted

firmly in my refusal, and there was no more said upon the subject. He did not discontinue his visits, but he was much more cold with me; he paid attention only to my mother, and, to such good purpose, that eighteen months after he married her, and I was much better pleased to have him for a father-in-law than a husband. I resume my narrative: I delighted the convent with my harp; twice I sang motetts within the grated organ gallery; the nun, who officiated as organist, played well; I was accompanied by her and by myself on the harp; on these two occasions there was an enormous crowd assembled to hear me in the outer church. My mother received no visitors in the parlour; she wrote or embroidered the whole day. She was then writing her second novel, entitled, *Letters of Two Young Ladies*. I forgot to say, that she sent the first, (*Le Danger des Liaisons,*) to M. de Voltaire, who replied by some verses, full of compliments, beginning with the four following lines, which have been printed in several collections, though they scarcely deserved such a distinction:

> J'ai lu votre charmant ouvrage.
> Savez-vous quel en est l'effet?
> On veut se lier davantage
> Avec la muse qui l'a fait.

My mother received several letters from M. de Voltaire. As for me, I amused myself with reading

some books which the Countess de Sercey, my father's sister, lent me; among others, the *Essays on Paris*, of M. Sainte Foix, which interested me the more from my knowledge of the author; I found that work to be, as it really is, very amusing, full of wit and of many curious facts. I read also the works of Moncrif,* and the poems of Madame Deshoulières. To these I added the *Thoughts of Count Oxenstiern*, and the *Essay on Opinion*, of M. Legendre, two works which my father esteemed highly, and which had belonged to him, and, for this reason, they were infinitely more precious to me. I afterwards lost them, to my great regret, in changing my residence. The *Essay on Opinion* delighted me; this work, which is now no longer read, is very curious and instructive. I made my first extracts from this book, and since that time I have never read a volume without noting down its substance, or, at least, without making some selections. These occupations, with the time I passed at church, my harp, and my other instruments, made me find the four months and a half very short, which I spent at the convent of the Précieux Sang. I there formed a friendship with a charming young person, whom I have since met in society, Mademoiselle de Roissi; she was only thir-

* Moncrif (whose real name was Paradis,) was an author, musician, and poet. He died at the Tuileries in 1770, aged 83.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

teen, but extremely staid for her age, and very clever. She was passionately attached to me; and when we were about to leave the convent, she was so profoundly grieved, that I agreed with her governess to conceal the day of our departure.

We next went to lodge at the Convent of St. Joseph; within which my mother hired a lodging. Madame du Deffant had apartments without the convent, but at that time I had no acquaintance with her. Two or three months afterwards my cousin, the Marquis of Sercey, quitted France for St. Domingo; the evening before his departure happened to be that of his birth-day. My aunt wished to celebrate the day, but only amongst the family; she begged my mother to bring me, and to allow me to play a little part in the fête, and my mother consented. I loved my aunt and my cousins tenderly; I wrote a song for my cousin, for which I also composed the music, which I still remember, as well as the first verse, which I subjoin. It was then the month of October:

De ces fleurs l'éclat dure encore;
Vous partez, il va se flétrir:
Voici les derniers dons de Flore,
L'Amitié vient vous les offrir.

I have forgotten the others; only I remember that the last was thought very touching. Drest as a shepherdess, I sung my song after presenting him

with a nosegay, and accompanying myself on the pipe. Afterwards I returned drest as a Spanish girl, and sung a song written by my mother to the guitar, to the air of a march; then I played on the harp, which terminated our little fête. A few days after our establishment at St. Joseph, my mother became acquainted with a countryman of her own, of the age of twenty-eight or twenty-nine, who was introduced to her by one of her friends, M. Marin. This was M. de Sauvigny, author of a tragedy in three acts, called *The Death of Socrates*, which had been represented two years before; a piece extremely cold, but which had some success, and which proved a talent for versification. M. de Sauvigny had also written *The Loves of Pierre the Long and Blanche Bazu*, in the style of Marot; a charming piece, full of grace and *naïveté*. I have never been partial to this kind of imitation, but here the imitation is so perfect, that it has all the merit of originality. There are in this romance some charming songs, which Marot himself could not have written with more beauty and naïveté; they were set to music by Albanèze. . . . .

A month after the departure of my cousin for St. Domingo, my destiny was fixed for life; I was secretly married to M. de Genlis.* M. de Genlis, who

* In one of the lately published biographies of living characters, it is stated that M. de Genlis married me *in consequence*

was then twenty-seven, having neither father nor mother, could dispose of himself as he pleased; but he had a good reason for dreading an opposition to his marriage. The Marquis de Puisieux, the head of his family, on his first return to France, had proposed to him a marriage with a young lady, an orphan, who had forty thousand francs a year; her name was Mademoiselle de la Motte; M. de Genlis consented to marry her. M. de Puisieux busied himself strenuously about the affair, and five weeks after he told M. de Genlis that he had hopes of success; M. de Genlis was by this time indifferent about the matter, but he durst not avow this. Some time after, M. de Puisieux told him that the thing was concluded, and that he had given his word. M. de Genlis had not the courage to confess his sentiments, and it was at this moment that we were married. M. de Puisieux could not fail to be excessively displeased, that a person whom he regarded as his son, and who was not rich, should marry a young person who had nothing, especially after he had suffered him to take a great deal of unnecessary trouble, and to give his promise in vain....his anger was consequently both violent and of long continuance.

Eight days after my marriage we left St. Joseph,

of my great literary reputation. At that time I had assuredly no reputation of the kind. From this may be estimated the truth of the rest.—*(Note by the Author.)*

and went to live with my aunt, Madame de Sercey, who resided in the Rue de Rohan. There I was married at her parish church at midnight. The next day our marriage was published, and it made much noise, for the anger of M. de Puisieux, who complained bitterly about it, formed the subject of public conversation during several days. M. de Genlis, a younger son of a family of Picardy, had only twelve thousand francs a year, and no expectations but the chance of a share in the property of his grandmother, the Marchioness de Droménil, who had about forty thousand francs per annum. She lived at Rheims, and was eighty-four years of age. M. de Genlis had served in the navy with the greatest reputation for courage and ability; especially as I have already said in a famous naval action commanded by M. d'Aché; when out of twenty-two officers, there remained only M. de Genlis, who was covered with wounds, one of which (in the thigh) he kept open for five years, but had it healed upon his marriage; and this being done incautiously, produced in the end a terrible derangement in his health. For his share in the action to which I have alluded, M. de Genlis received the cross of St. Louis at the age of twenty-one—an extraordinary favour, of which I have since seen but one example. M. de Bullion, for a brilliant achievement in the war, received the same honour, but at a somewhat more advanced age; he was twenty-four.

M. de Genlis remained long in the East Indies, where he commanded a regiment for five years, and was present at the siege of Pondicherry, where he conducted himself with the same distinguished valour which he has always evinced. Pondicherry was taken by the English, when all the French officers departed for France. M. de Genlis, as I have stated, was taken by the English and carried into China; he was more than four months at Canton, from whence he was brought to Lanceston in Cornwall. When he returned to Paris, M. de Puisieux persuaded him to quit the navy, (he was then a captain,) and to enter the land-service with the rank of colonel; and he was accordingly created colonel of grenadiers.

I passed only ten days at Paris after my marriage. M. de Genlis waited upon M. de Puisieux and the Maréchale Duchesse d'Etrée his daughter, but was refused admittance; he wrote to them, but received no answer. He made me write to his grandmother, but she also made no reply. Of all his relations, the Count and Countess de Balincour were the only persons who, on that occasion, showed him any marks of attention. They came to visit me, loaded me with caresses, and gave me the most flattering hopes. Their visit gave me inexpressible pleasure, and the gratitude with which it inspired me, was the commencement of my very intimate acquaintance

with two persons whom I have always so tenderly loved.

A visit which touched me far less, was that of Madame de Montesson, who came to call upon my mother; my marriage was flattering to her vanity. She was very polite to Monsieur de Genlis, who took me the next day to her house, and to that of M. and Madame de Balincour; we went to Genlis four or five days after. My brother-in-law, who was there in expectation of our arrival, received me with great kindness and friendship.

The Marquis de Genlis, then thirty-one years of age, (being four more than his brother,) had a handsome person as well as his brother; but he had a better air; indeed I have never seen a more noble, light, and elegant exterior. He had already lost all his hair; I have heard that he once had as fine teeth as his brother, but they were already spoiled; all his features however were handsome, and the general expression of his face very agreeable. Never man profited less by the most brilliant gifts of nature and fortune. With a remarkably handsome face, talents, and grace, he was at the age of fifteen, proprietor of the estate of Genlis, one of the finest in the realm, and free from all incumbrances, with the certainty of one day possessing that of Sillery, which came to him in reversion. M. de Puisieux, his guardian, to whom the king was much attached, made him colonel at the age of fifteen, at the same time, saying to

him; "If you conduct yourself well, you will make a very excellent marriage; being colonel at your age, you have before you a brilliant military career; and for your sake, for I regard you as my son, I will obtain of the king, on your marriage, the elevation of Sillery into a duchy." All this was certain, even with the supposition of middling talents, provided only that he kept himself free from extravagant follies. But at seventeen, he discovered already a passion for play, and an extreme licentiousness of manners. He contracted debts, and committed follies; they were paid—he was reprimanded—he was pardoned; but he showed no disposition to reform himself. At last, at the age of twenty, he lost at play in one night five hundred thousand francs to the Baron de Vioménil; he owed already upwards of one hundred thousand. The anger of M. de Puisieux was excessive, and carried him too far; he obtained a *lettre de cachet*, and confined his ward in the Castle of Saumur for five years; as my brother-in-law used to say, a year for each hundred thousand francs. His military career was closed through this rigour; having been obliged to quit the service, he never again entered it. When he got out of Saumur, one half of his debts had been already paid; M. de Puisieux obtained an order to prevent him from disposing of his estate, and exiled him to Genlis. This estate produced nearly seventy-five thousand francs a year; my brother-in-law had an allowance of fifteen

thousand, and the rest was employed in the payment of the remainder of his debts. His exile lasted two years, after which he had permission to go to Paris, where he only passed three months of the winter; but M. de Puisieux declared that he would never remove the interdict till he should make a good marriage. Such was the situation of the Marquis de Genlis when I arrived at his château. Notwithstanding his losses and his misfortunes, he possessed uncommon gaiety. Nothing in his behaviour discovered a taste for irregularities; on the contrary, his manners were exceedingly guarded and decent; his pleasantries were always polished, gentle, and delicate; the gracefulness of his manners has been often praised; and it was really remarkable. A great many of his bon mots have been quoted: he passes for having had a superior understanding; this was not the case; he had only the talent of wit, and a great acquaintance with the tone of good society; but he was incapable of the slightest reflection, and of a frivolity, of which I have seen few examples; his talents were below mediocrity whenever it became necessary to speak or act seriously. He pretended to have read much, and complained extremely of his memory—the common excuse of those who are ignorant, and ashamed of it. He mingled in all he said a dash of irony and a slight tone of ridicule, which he brought into fashion, but which no one could employ with so

much grace; this tone in him had nothing offensive about it; it was his style of gaiety, and had no mixture of bitterness in it. This slightly mocking wit, rendered him piquant when you only saw him for a short time, and on the contrary, ended by rendering him insipid when you lived habitually with him, for it was impossible to cure him of it; for I have always found that nothing becomes so fatiguing, and even insupportable at last, as a person who has but one manner of speaking, and one kind of wit, however brilliant it may be. The Marquis de Genlis has been praised for his equality of humour, which nothing could ever alter; but such a praise is only due to persons of sense and reflection; *their* equality of temper springs from their courage and the strength of their understanding, while the same effects are produced in others by mere carelessness and levity.

I remained only a few days at Genlis; I was there entertained with pond-fishing. Unluckily I went with little white embroidered shoes, and when I got to the edge of the pond, I slipped into the mud: my brother-in-law came to my assistance, and remarking my shoes, called me *a fine lady from Paris*, which vexed me extremely; for, having been brought up in a country house, I had announced all the pretensions of a person to whom all sorts of rural amusements are familiar. I replied with some warmth to the pleasantries of my brother-in-law; but hearing all

the neighbours assembled at the fishing, repeating that I was *a fine lady from Paris*, my vexation became extreme; so, stooping down, I picked up a small fish about the length of my finger, and swallowed it alive, saying, "This is to show that I am a fine lady from Paris." I have done many other foolish things in my life, but certainly nothing so whimsical as this. Every one was confounded. M. de Genlis scolded me a great deal, and terrified me by saying, that the fish might live and enlarge in my stomach—a fright of which I did not get rid for several months.

Towards the end of November, M. de Genlis carried me to the abbey of Origny Sainte Benoîte, eight leagues from Genlis, and two from St. Quentin. I was to remain there four months—that is to say, all the time that my husband remained at Nancy, where the regiment of Grenadiers of France was stationed, of which he was one of the twenty-four colonels. Thinking me too young to present me at court, which was considered very licentious, notwithstanding the piety, the virtues, and the old age of the good king Stanislaus, M. de Genlis judged it more advisable to place me in a convent where he had some female relations. Besides, at this time it was not the custom for new married wives to accompany their husbands to their garrisons. Madame d'Avaret, sister of Madame de Coaslin, was the first, who, three or four

years afterwards, set an example, which was then generally remarked upon, and has never been universally followed. I wept much at my separation from M. de Genlis, but afterwards I amused myself greatly at Origny. That abbey was very rich, and its abbess was always a person of high birth; the then abbess was called Madame de Sabran; her predecessor was Madame de Soubise. Though the nuns were not required to give proofs of their nobility, they were almost all persons of rank, and bore their family names. The houses belonging to the abbey, were very large and elegant. There were upwards of one hundred religious women, without counting those employed in servile occupations, and two classes of boarders, the one consisting of children, the other of young persons from twelve to eighteen years of age. The plan of education was excellent for forming virtuous, industrious, and sensible wives, intended to live in the country. I had pretty apartments within the convent, with a waiting-maid, and I had a man-servant, who lodged with the domestics of the abbess in the external part of the abbey; I dined at the table of the abbess, who had always excellent cheer. We were waited on by two nuns who did that part of the duty of the convent. My breakfast was always brought into my room. The abbess received gentlemen at dinner and in her apartments, but they were not permitted to go elsewhere; indeed, the nuns were

not permitted to show themselves. The abbess had her servants, a carriage and horses, and she had a right to go out in her carriage, accompanied by her *chapeline*, and the nuns she might choose to accompany her. She often went to walk in the fields, to visit some parts of her property, or the sick persons, to whom she herself carried assistance; I accompanied her twice on these charitable expeditions, which took place mostly in summer. Each nun had a neat cell, and a pretty little garden of her own, within the vast inclosure of the abbey garden. One of the nuns had in hers a large rock, from which issued a fountain of water excellent for drinking. The frankness and the piety of these religious persons often brought to my remembrance my angelic nuns of the Rue Cassette. Yet they were much less perfect. There was the same faith, the same candour, the same taste for industry, but not the same union among themselves. The abbess had her favourites, the great *dignitaries*, the lady steward, the lady chapeline—and this formed a sort of party, which again produced another party, which might be called the *opposition;* but there was no malignity and no perfidy. Religion mingled in the jealousies of both, appeasing and pacifying the spirits of all.

What particularly marked the two parties was, the tender union of the members of each, and the little preferences by which they distinguished their friends.

I had an opportunity of knowing every thing to its foundation, for I did not scruple, in spite of the abbess's kindness to me, to range myself on the side of the opposition, that is, to choose all my favourites from them, for there was, on that side, a little air of opposition which touched me; and, besides, a relation of M. de Genlis happened to be of the number. This was Madame de Rochefort, daughter of the Marquis of St. Pouen, and sister of Madame de Balincour. Her father had forced her to take the vows, at the age of seventeen; she loved her cousin, the Comte de Rochefort, and was beloved; she was extremely unhappy during the two first years of her profession, but, at last, she became perfectly resigned to her fate; she was thirty years old when I arrived at Origny, and an excellent person. She spoke to me often of her sister, Madame de Balincour, whom she loved tenderly, and from whom, once a year, she received little presents, which delighted the nuns—sugar, coffee, wool, and silk for embroidering. Madame de Rochefort, on the other hand, sent her all sorts of work, done with the care and perfection of which nuns alone seem to be capable. Madame de Rochefort made me promise, that, when I went to Paris, I would request Madame de Balincour to demand permission of the Archbishop to authorize her, for the benefit of her health, to pass three or four months with her family, that is to say, with her

beloved sister—a permission seldom refused to persons of the age and station of Madame de Balincour, and for persons who were no longer young. I found means to interest M. and Madame de Balincour in favour of Madame de Rochefort, that they invited her to come. She passed four months at Balincour, of which three glided by in peace and happiness; but M. de Balincour one day carried her to the house of a young peasant girl, named Nicole, whom he had given away in marriage four years before. This picture of rustic union, and perfect felicity—of Nicole in the midst of her happy family, and surrounded by her three infants, and her young husband, her father and her mother—recalled to the mind of the unfortunate nun her first love, and hopes of happiness, gone beyond return! . . . and while every one was contemplating with pleasure that interesting spectacle, she fainted. . . . The thought was to her a death-wound—she fell rapidly into a mortal consumption, and never returned to her convent; her father who, doubtless for his punishment, still lived, came to carry his dying daughter into Auvergne, to an estate where, shortly after, she expired in his arms! It was this story, which I have here related with scrupulous fidelity, on which I shortly afterwards founded the first novel I ever showed to any one. I wrote it as well as I could, with little embellishment. I read it to M. de Genlis, and M. de Sauvigny, who

were delighted with it. It was the first encouragement I had ever received; since that time I have transferred it to *Adèle et Théodore;* it is the Episode of *Cécile.*

To return to Origny. I was comfortable here, and beloved; I often played on the harp in the abbess's apartment; I sung motetts in the organ gallery of the church, and I played tricks with the nuns: I ran about the corridors in the night, that is, at midnight, in strange disguises, generally attired as the devil, with horns on my head, and my face blackened; I awoke the young nuns; I entered quietly into the cells of the old women whom I knew to be deaf, and painted their faces with rouge and patches, without awakening them. They got up every night to go to the choir; and their surprise may be guessed at, when, after hastily dressing without a glass, they met at the church, and found each other thus painted and patched. I easily gained admission into the cells, for the nuns are forbidden to lock themselves in, and are obliged to leave their keys in the door day and night. During the carnival, with the abbess's permission, I gave balls in my apartments twice a week. I was permitted to introduce the village fiddler, who was blind of one eye, and sixty years old. He piqued himself upon knowing all the figures and steps, and I still recollect that he called the chassés, *flanqués*. My dancers were the nuns

and the boarders; the former represented the men, and the others were the ladies. I gave for refreshments cider, and excellent pastry made in the convent. I have since been at many superb balls, but certainly I have never danced at any with so much spirit and gaiety of heart.

There happened here a grand adventure, which spread the fame of my courage through the convent. A young person, who wished to become a nun, came with her mother to Origny, where they were lodged in some large rooms adjoining to mine, and which had been empty for the last three years. Every body in the convent went to bed before ten; for my own part, I generally wrote, read, or played on the harp till two o'clock in the morning; the very night of the arrival of the young novice, I heard some one at midnight knock gently at the door of my room; it was the novice and her mother. They were trembling, and told me that they had been awakened by a strange noise, which they heard in a cabinet adjoining their room, and into which they had not entered. As the night was very windy, I told them that the noise was not surprising. They replied, that it was so prodigious, that it seemed as if some person without was attempting to break open the window which looked out upon the poultry-yard. The mother thought it must be a robber, who, having scaled the walls, was endeavouring to enter the house; the

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daughter said she believed it *simply* to be an apparition. Mademoiselle Victoire, my waiting-maid, who was very courageous, offered to go and investigate the matter; and I, piqued with the desire of emulating her, said that we should all accompany her. All agreed to go; I distributed arms, the broom, the tongs, fire-shovel, &c. I marched at their head, and we entered very gaily into the apartment of the two strangers; on arriving at the door of the cabinet, we listened, and heard, in reality, an extraordinary noise. Nevertheless, with one of those impulses of imprudence and boldness which have often inspired me through my life, I burst open the door, and made Victoire, who had a light, enter first: opposite the door was a window, with a large white curtain drawn . . . and scarcely had the valorous Victoire cast her eyes on this curtain, than she turned pale, her knees shook, and the light wavered in her trembling hand; for she saw, as I did at the same moment, two large feet, which passed out under this curtain . . . It was equal to seeing a robber; but, without more consideration, I rushed forward, exclaiming, "Well, let us speak to him; do not leave me alone, but come forward!" . . . and, as I said this, I laid hold suddenly on the curtain. . . . What was our agreeable surprise, on discovering that these supposed feet were only a pair of men's shoes, so placed, as to produce the illusion which had so

alarmed us. As to the noise, it proceeded from a screen, of which one of the nails had been loosened, so that when put in motion by the wind, it struck against the window with such force as to have broken two or three panes. This apartment had been inhabited some years before, by an old lady, who was waited upon by her own man-servant, a permission which was granted to all the married boarders, and which I had myself; the large shoes had apparently belonged to the servant, who had forgotten to carry them away; the room was never entered, so that the shoes still remained there.

I passed four months and a half at Origny, and my time passed away very agreeably. I learnt of the nuns several pretty kinds of work, and of a servant of the poultry yard how to bring up pigeons and fowls; I also taught myself to make pastry and *entremets*; my guitar, my harp, and my pen, employed me a great part of the day, and I devoted at least two hours every morning to reading. I was very ignorant, for I had never read any books, all my time, up to that period, having been given to the study of music; however I was very curious, and I burned with anxiety to acquire information. They lent me at the convent the inestimable Ecclesiastical History of Feury, with which I was enchanted; and a lady of St. Quentin lent me Pompignan's poems, and a volume of Moncrif's songs. I was passionately fond

of verse, and I composed many poems at Origny, among others a kind of Epistle on the Happiness of a Religious Life, and the tranquillity of the Cloister; and I made extracts from all I read—a habit which I have preserved all the rest of my life. Besides I wrote long letters to my mother and M. de Genlis; and amidst all these constant and lasting occupations, I still found time to achieve so many school girls' frolics, that it would require a volume to detail them.

My mother gave me a proof of her tenderness and goodness, by coming to Origny to see me, and passing six weeks with me in the convent. She lodged within the convent, in a large room which was vacant, adjoining to mine. I invented all sorts of things for her amusement. The abbess had a waiting-maid who had attended her for ten years, called Mademoiselle Beaufort; she was the best creature in the world, and made delicious cream custards; a merit which produced between us a very intimate acquaintance. She told me of a rustic marriage which was to take place in some farmer's family of her acquaintance, a league from Origny, to which she had obtained permission of the abbess to go: I wished also to be of the party, but incognita, and disguised as a peasant, with Mademoiselle Victoire, and my mother, also disguised as peasants, and all unknown to the abbess. Mademoiselle Beaufort was delighted with

the invention, and furnished us with dresses. We bribed a portress, sent word to the abbess that we were ill with headachs, and that we should dine in our rooms; and we set off by stealth at one in the afternoon. We went to the farm in a cart, and were presented to the new-married people as peasants, relations of Mademoiselle Beaufort, who added that I was her god-daughter. I met with the most brilliant reception at this little party, which we did not leave till the fall of day. But a terrible storm awaited us at Origny; we had been betrayed by some one; the abbess knew of our frolic, and was exceedingly scandalized at our disguises, and especially at our having left the abbey without acquainting her. I represented to her mildly, that being with my mother, my excursion at least could have nothing improper in it. The abbess then threw out all her venom on Mademoiselle Beaufort; and the next day the poor woman entered my room in tears, telling me that the abbess had discharged her. "Well," said I, "I will take you into my service." Mademoiselle Beaufort was transported with joy, and installed herself forthwith in my apartments. In vain the abbess fumed and fretted; I persisted with great coolness in my resolution, and Mademoiselle Beaufort remained with me. We had already performed in our rooms several little scenes to amuse my mother in the evening, when all those belonging to the convent

had retired. Mademoiselle Beaufort, to my great surprise, requested me to assign her the part of a shepherdess: she was forty-five years old, her hair was grey, her nose pimpled, and she wanted two of her front teeth. We played the Oracle; and I made her perform the part of the lover, whom Lucinda calls *Charmant*, and whom she leads about in a rose-coloured ribbon: having no dress for the part, we habited her gaily in the great coat of my servant Lemire, assuring her that it was indispensable she should wear on her head a cotton nightcap, worked all over with coloured wool, which my mother's man-servant lent her: thus agreeably equipped, she performed in the most comical style imaginable the part of *Charmant*. As she continued perpetually to ask me to let her perform shepherdesses, I wrote a little pastoral piece for her. We extolled so extravagantly her acting and her graces, and she became so persuaded that she was ravishing in this costume, that I proposed to her to wear it constantly, to which she consented. From this time she was always dressed in the taste of the shepherdesses of the idylls, with short white petticoats bordered with ribbons of various colours, and wearing on one side of the head a little straw hat ornamented with flowers, or with her hair drest and powdered to hide her grey locks; and when she left my apartments to go into the convent I always insisted on her taking her crook,

a thing of which at last she contracted a habit. All my friends encouraged her pastoral illusions, and when the rest laughed at her, Mademoiselle Beaufort told them it was only to pay their court to the abbess. I kept her with me, thus attired as a shepherdess, for more than two months; up to the time when M. de Genlis, on returning from his regiment, came to carry me back with him; the aspect of Mademoiselle Beaufort (whom I always styled *my shepherdess*) astonished him prodigiously; but at my repeated request, he consented to take her with us to Genlis, still wearing her pastoral dress; and very soon what was at first complaisance became at last a real amusement to him. I kept my shepherdess at Genlis two or three months, when news of an unexpected and very considerable inheritance called her to Noyon. As she had amused us infinitely, our adieus were very tender. To finish her history, I should mention that she came into possession of thirty-two thousand francs, and a few months after had the folly to marry a young man of twenty-three, who had nothing, and who had found means to persuade her that he was desperately enamoured of her.

I shall now resume the thread of my narrative and return to Origny.

One praise I may venture to give myself, because I am quite sure I deserve it; and that is, that I have always had a clear judgment, and consequently a

great foundation of sense; yet I have committed a thousand follies—a thousand unreasonable things; and no one existing has ever reflected less than I upon her present interests, her conduct, and its consequences: at the same time no human being has ever reflected more on what was not personal to herself—on her reading, on mankind, on the world, and on chimeras. Governed by my imagination from infancy, I have always loved better to busy myself with what I *created* than with what already existed. I have never considered the future but as a dream, where one may introduce any thing that one pleases. It seems to me insipid to place there only things so probable that any one may believe they will occur. I had not the gift of foresight, but I had that of invention. I have already said that in my childhood I delighted in composing fictions which had no reference to the destiny I might naturally expect. I loved to place myself in extraordinary situations, and to see myself triumph over all the obstacles of adversity. I had always preserved this *mania*, which enabled me to pass many delicious hours in the solitude of Origny. Every evening before retiring to rest, I gave myself up for an hour, and sometimes longer, to this kind of meditation: often I fancied myself with a female friend, to whom I related my astonishing adventures; my friend interrupted or interrogated me; and her surprise, her admiration, and

her eulogies enchanted me. I had always had somewhat the habit of talking aloud in these reveries, but it was at Origny that I gave the last touches of perfection to these imaginary dialogues, to which the sound of my voice imparted an appearance of truth, which was almost equal to reality, and in some respects was better; for what human friend can enter into our sentiments, can love us, and understand us so well as the fictitious one whom we create for ourselves? It is certain that these reveries strengthened my character and my heart, and they have been very useful to me since the revolution; but up to that period, and in the ordinary course of events, they have been highly injurious to me, by hindering me from reflecting on what I had really before me; so that I have grown old with all my faults, and my experience has had but little effect either on my conduct or my disposition.

I remained four months and a half at Origny; at the end of which time M. de Genlis came to take me away in the month of April. I had become so much attached to these good nuns, that I melted into tears on quitting them. I proposed seriously to M. de Genlis to allow me to remain with them a month longer; and was much surprised at receiving a dry and decided refusal. All the convent was deeply grieved; for I had caused a great deal of bustle and gaiety. I have never seen in that convent

any thing but perfect innocence, sincere piety, and virtuous examples. There was at Origny, a nun then forty-five years old, who had given a striking example of a genuine and great vocation; her name was Madame de Reith, and she was of remarkable beauty, even at the age at which I saw her; she was of an Irish catholic family, left an orphan at the age of ten, and a great heiress, and had been sent to Origny at eleven, to learn French and finish her education. On her return to Dublin, at the age of seventeen, she declared her intention of taking the vows at Origny; every means was employed to dissuade her from this step; several matches were proposed to her; the most agreeable young men endeavoured to attract her attention; she was introduced into the great world; but she persisted in her resolution with unalterable firmness, and when she became of age, she divided her fortune among her natural heirs, excepting fifty thousand francs, which she gave to an hospital, and forty thousand to the abbey of Origny, where she took the veil at the age of twenty-one years and three months. She pronounced her vows a year afterwards.

On quitting Origny we went to Genlis; my brother-in-law was at Paris, from whence he was not expected to return till July. In the mean time we paid visits to the surrounding gentry: almost all our neighbours were old people, but all very pleasant to

associate with; among others were the Marquis de Flavigny and his wife; M. de Bournonville, who had twelve children; the president, de Vauxmenil, whose son was an admirable painter of landscapes, and M. de St. Cenis, the only one among them who had a young wife.

M. de Genlis and I determined to give a fête to his brother on his arrival; we had plenty of time to prepare it; it was determined that we should perform plays, and in consequence, we required a little theatre; we wanted a scene painter, and sent for one from St. Quentin. The name of this painter was M. Tirmane; he was a person of fifty, whose oddities and credulity amused me excessively for six months. M. Tirmane had as much vanity as simplicity; he was very good at painting the ceiling of a room, or the ornaments of a saloon, and he fancied himself a Raphael and a Rubens; he gave us a specimen of his abilities in the drop-scene of our theatre, of which he had the vanity to make a picture which represented an ill-drawn figure of a woman playing the harp askew, that is to say, with the instrument placed over her left shoulder. M. de Genlis, on seeing this *chef-d'œuvre*, cried out that it was my portrait, and a striking likeness! M. Tirmane acknowledged that he had in fact intended to paint my portrait from memory; and enchanted with this first successful effort, he begged permission to paint me *regularly*,

but with dishevelled hair: for he had been much struck with the length of my hair, and its chesnut colour. I promised to give him a sitting next day, and I prepared myself accordingly; I painted my face with deep red, and parted my hair into long elflocks without powder, some of which I twisted about my neck, and some about my arms and my waist; I placed on my head a profusion of beads, tinsel, and flowers, and in this attire I offered myself to the pencil of M. Tirmane, who was dazzled and struck with the splendour of my beauty, inasmuch as I made an imperceptible mouth by drawing in my lips, and opened my eyes with all my might to make them look larger. It was thus that M. Tirmane painted my portrait, that is to say, with the head of a Gorgon, for these long locks of brown hair were like nothing so much as serpents. A few days afterwards, we renewed, in favour of M. Tirmane a part of the adventures of Don Quixote, at the house of the Duchess. M. Blanchard, the house-steward, caused him to be robbed at midday, two hundred yards from the château, by the gardener, who was drest up as a robber, with black hair and mustaches: M. Tirmane returned to the house in his shirt, and related his piteous adventure, assuring us that the robber was a foot and a half taller than the gardener. M. de Genlis consoled him, by assuring him that he had a right, in the absence of his brother, to condemn all the

robbers in the district to death. Two or three postilions on horseback were sent in pursuit, who returned in an hour afterwards, bringing in the robber loaded with chains, which occasioned a transport of joy to M. Tirmane. All the stolen goods were recovered, along with several louis in addition, which were adjudged to M. Tirmane, in the shape of damages. M. de Genlis, drest in a black robe, and attended by the bailli of the place and the barber, shut himself up in a room to interrogate and try the prisoner; during this time I remained with M. Tirmane, and three or four other persons. In an hour and a half we were informed that the prisoner was condemned to death. "Well done!" cried M. Tirmane, clapping his hands; upon this I told him that he had now an opportunity of covering himself with glory, by prostrating himself at the feet of M. de Genlis, and demanding the criminal's pardon: he was somewhat obstinate at first, but I gave him to understand that he would be rewarded for such a trait of magnanimity. He then consented, on our assurance that the prisoner should be imprisoned for life in the tower of the château; whereupon M. Tirmane, assembling all his sentiments of heroism, went and threw himself at the feet of the judge, and with the most comical emphasis possible, requested the prisoner's pardon: M. de Genlis and his assistants, struck with admiration, pulled out their handkerchiefs, and pretended

to burst into tears: afterwards M. de Genlis told him that he was grand-master of the Order of Judgment, that he should be received a member of it in twenty-four hours, and that that order conferred nobility upon all who belonged to it. M. Tirmane at these words fell into an ecstacy; and he has often said since, that this moment was the happiest of his life. As to the prisoner, he was condemned to the galleys for life—a sentence which was highly approved of by M. Tirmane. The next night, M. Tirmane was made to perform the ceremony of *watching his armour*, in the court belonging to the castle, with a gun on his shoulder, and a dark lantern in his hand, in order to learn by heart as he walked about, a catechism of chivalry composed by M. de Genlis, the most comical and absurd that can be imagined; he remained here till morning, after which he was plunged into a cold bath, and then drest in the white robe of the candidate, which was the dressing-gown of M. de Genlis. There were at Chaumy, two leagues from Genlis, the regiments of Chartres and Conti, to the colonels of which M. de Genlis had written to come with their troops, to honour the reception of M. Tirmane, the new made knight; they came at noon with a hundred men on horseback; all the young men of the village, in white waistcoats, decorated with rose-coloured ribbons, were also in the court-yard. The candidate as pale as death, and worn out with fatigue, was led

into a great hall, where I was seated on a throne of flowers and branches, and encircled by the officers of the regiments of Chartres and Conti, who had their swords drawn. M. de Genlis fastened to his dressing-gown, with a green ribbon, an old gilt medal of the Chancellor de Sillery, which we found in the library; after this, the candidate knelt on one knee before me, and I armed him a knight, by giving him a lance of an enormous length, and a helmet, which was only a wine cooler, covered with gilt paper, and decorated with feathers. He was then attired in another and a more splendid dressing-gown, all covered with scarlet garlands; and equipped in this superb style, the new knight, animated by glory, descended into the court to exhibit his triumphal entry, amidst fifes and drums, and the shouts of the horse-guards and the peasants, who cried out, " Long live the noble knight Tirmane!" All these honours so intoxicated him that he actually burst into tears. After the ceremony we dined, and drank his health several times; he drank abundantly, and fell asleep at the dessert, when M. de Genlis woke him to listen to some couplets which he had composed in praise of his clemency. On quitting the table, he was conducted to a *bal champêtre*, which lasted till eleven. Afterwards, as he was of the Order of Judgment, he was compelled to settle the causes of several peasants, who played their parts admirably; and at last, over-

powered with glory, and desire to sleep, he retired to bed at one in the morning.

These ludicrous scenes were followed by others, which I shall always remember with pleasure, but which would fill a volume, if I gave them in detail; at last, we carried our knight to the house of the Marquis de Flavigny. M. Tirmane discovered in this castle *the Queen of Alcala,* who gave him, with many ceremonies, the title of *Don,* and at the same time, I was honoured with the rank of Donna. From this time, the Chevalier Don Tirmane never gave me any other title than the Countess Donna. After this ceremony, the Chevalier was ordered to retire into a room, to compose an oration of thanks to the queen. An hour after, being admitted to the foot of the throne, he said, "Princess, I am then a Don! . . . . ." He stopped there; and the queen was extremely delighted with a speech, which, at least, expressed a very lively satisfaction. These follies lasted three months, and I have never laughed so heartily during the rest of my life! When I felt myself beginning to laugh, I drew my handkerchief from my pocket, and the Chevalier Don Tirmane thinking that I wept with the tenderness of the scene, became himself touched with the extreme sensibility of the Countess Donna. But the most singular thing about this long-continued mystification was, that of all the domestics, the peasants, and our neighbours, who

were in the secret, not one gave a single hint to M. Tirmane, which could tend to undeceive him.

However, since we had conferred nobility upon him, he had become very insolent towards the domestics, and in general to all who were not noble; but every one amused himself with his credulity, and each strove which should load him with the greatest honours, and best flatter his vanity, which was extreme. M. de Genlis caused to be made for him a most ridiculous dress, which put the finishing touch to his happiness. The coat was brown, decorated with enormous silver trimmings; a waistcoat with a long brown and silver fringe; he had a hat bordered with broad silver lace, and I made him a present of a cravat of coarse lace, with two long ends which hung down, surmounted by a knot of flame-coloured ribbon. He wore this magnificent dress on Sundays and on the days when we had company, never omitting to fix at his button-hole his large gilt medal, suspended by a green ribbon. One day the Count de Barbançon arrived from Paris, and not yet knowing the Chevalier Don Tirmane, happened to reach Genlis half an hour before dinner. M. de Barbançon was a very grave person, and we did not think of preparing him for the singular personage he was to meet, as M. Tirmane was not then in the room; but he heard that a stranger had arrived, and he hastened to put on his grand dress, before he entered the dining-room. At

the sight of that strange figure, M. de Barbançon stood stupefied; and M. Tirmane, approaching M. de Genlis, whispered in his ear to ask "if the stranger were noble?" and on receiving the answer of M. de Genlis, M. Tirmane, in a tone of which it is impossible to give any idea, advanced towards M. de Barbançon, and said with great gravity, "Noble stranger, I beg to have the honour of the *accolade de la cuisse*." M. de Barbançon's surprise was extreme; he stared at M. de Genlis, who had advised M. Tirmane to make this knightly demand: a sign which was made to M. de Barbançon explained the matter, and with great readiness he accorded the accolade de la cuisse.

The Chevalier Don Tirmane, wishing to leave to posterity an immortal memorial of so many marvellous adventures, employed his talents in tracing them from the commencement; he painted an oil picture, half as large as life, which represented him in the forest of Genlis, near the beautiful tree, called the *tree of the four brothers*, at the terrible moment when he was stripped and plundered, as well as the steward M. Blanchard. At the top of the picture was seen a part of the heavens, and the Holy Virgin surrounded by glories, from which there darted a ray of light upon M. Tirmane; he also placed a little ray on the head of M. Blanchard, which he termed a *ray of politeness*, for he attributed to his prayers alone, the

miracle of his deliverance. He desired that this picture might be placed in the church of Genlis, saying, that all Picardy would come and invoke the Virgin of the Forest of the Four Brothers, and that it would put out of fashion the pilgrimages to Notre Dame de Liesse; but I suggested, that it was wrong to interfere with any pilgrimage, and that we should respect them all alike. I placed this picture in my room, and kept it there a long time; I even had it when at the Palais Royal, I do not know what became of it afterwards.

The conclusion of the history of M. Tirmane, is the most entertaining part of his adventures. He lived eight months at Genlis. During this time, he often wrote to his wife, who lived at St. Quentin, to communicate to her the news of his happiness and his glory. His wife, less credulous than himself, assured him in her answers, that we were making game of him; he showed us her letters, laughing at the same time, at what he called her incapacity for comprehending things so elevated, and adding, "She *must* believe me, when she sees that as a noble, I no longer pay the taxes imposed on the common people." "Certainly," replied M. de Genlis, "and for that purpose, you have only to show your medal and your diplomas of Chevalier and Don." "That will be a glorious moment for me," replied Don Tirmane; "how will the great folks of St. Quentin be humbled,

when they see me placed over all their heads!" and he named three or four whom he seemed to feel a peculiar delight in confounding and abasing. At last he left Genlis, and returned to St. Quentin. His first care, on his arrival at his own house, was to make his wife and his two daughters kneel down and kiss his medal. The next day he went to the town-hall decorated with his order; he displayed gravely his diplomas, and the patent of the Queen of Alcala, who had given him his title of *Don,* and that of her first painter. He then declared he would no longer pay the tax. His fancy was thought so whimsical and pleasant, that it was resolved not to undeceive him, and he was, in fact, exempted from the payment of all taxes; upon this, Madame Tirmane no longer doubted of the reality of all his stories. All the town of St. Quentin was amused at this mystification; the noble knight Don Tirmane was invited to dine every where, and treated with the greatest respect; this lasted twelve years, that is to say, to the time of his death. Though I have suppressed many incidents, and all the details of this madness, I am convinced that it still occupies too much space in these memoirs. But I cannot help recalling with pleasure those days when my gaiety was so lively and so open, when I laughed in the thoughtlessness of my heart, and when the future, the terrible future, was shrouded from our eyes by an impenetrable veil.

My brother-in-law returned to Genlis; when we acted plays, and gave entertainments for more than a fortnight.

During this time I was constantly occupied; I played and sung four or five hours a day; I wrote to my mother and Madame de Montesson, who replied in a very kind and affectionate manner, and I kept a journal of all that passed at the château; of which the adventures of M. Tirmane had already furnished a volume. I had a great desire to read; the library of Genlis was very considerable. The late Marquis of Genlis, a very grave and pious man, had collected one half of it, and my brother-in-law the other, composed entirely of romances. I had the good sense to prefer the books which had belonged to my father, that is to say, books of devotion, history, morality, and some volumes of plays. But as for history, I was so ignorant that I did not know where to begin. A book of geometry fell into my hands, and I found by the title-page, that it was so clear and plain that a child of twelve might understand it. I set myself about reading it with the utmost avidity, and being unable to comprehend any part of it, I concluded from thence that I had not even a common capacity, which discouraged me infinitely. I acquainted M. de Genlis with my vexation on the subject, and begged him to examine the book; he laughed at my simplicity, and informed me that in

order to comprehend the book, it was first necessary to have some notions of geometry. From this time I gave up scientific works, and read the Roman history of Laurent Echard; I ought to have begun with ancient history, but for want of a guide in my reading, I went on without any regular plan; a thing which in the beginning of my studies made me lose much time.

M. de Genlis made a journey to Paris, and brought back with him M. de Sauvigny, of whom I have already spoken, the author of *Blanche Bazu*, and some dramatic pieces; and Provaire the celebrated hautbois-player. I played on the harp in a manner which was astonishing and unrivalled at that period, but I read music very ill. Provaire, was a passionate admirer of my musical talents, and was extremely surprised to find me so little versed in the science, though I played very well on five or six instruments; he entreated that I would practise the reading of music an hour every day; I did so, and in less than six months I read every thing at sight, even the most difficult pieces for the harpsichord, and I have carried this talent as far as it can go.

The conversation and the counsels of M. de Sauvigny were very useful to me in another respect. He had a very pure taste in literature, and has greatly contributed to the formation of mine, in fortifying by excellent reasoning, my natural aversion for emphasis,

affectation, and false brilliancy. Every day, on returning from our walk, M. de Genlis, M. de Savigny, or I, read aloud for an hour. We read in this manner, in the space of four months, the Provincial Letters, the Letters of Madame de Sévigné, and all the plays of Pierre Corneille. Besides this, I continued my reading studies in my room, and my time passed away at once pleasantly and rapidly. A surgeon from La Fère came weekly to Genlis; I went over again with him all my old lessons of osteology; and furthermore, I learnt to let blood, a talent which I have acquired since in perfection, thanks to the instructions of the celebrated Chamousset.* I learned also to dress wounds. In short, I lost no opportunity of acquiring information, of whatever kind it might be. With this natural thirst for knowledge, the conversation of our aged neighbours did not at all annoy me; if they talked of agriculture, I listened with attention; I asked explanations of whatever I did not understand, and each conversation taught me something. I have followed this plan all my life, and it is

* Chamousset was the first who opposed the cruel custom then in use at the hospitals, of crowding several sick people into one bed. He hired a house at the barrier of Sèvres, to serve as the model an hospital; and the success of his method brought about a re orm at the Hotel Dieu, where, at last, every sick person had a separate bed. Chamousset died in 1773, at the age of forty-six.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

ARAJA SERFOJI'S

astonishing, that with such a method, and so excellent a memory as I have, I should not have gained, in the end, a quantity of information, much more extended and extraordinary than I have done. It is because a predominant taste will allow nothing that is foreign to it to remain profoundly fixed in the memory; it is our habitual thoughts, our daily reflexions, which form our various kinds of information. I have been *totally* ignorant of nothing, and have been able to speak tolerably on all subjects; but I have known nothing perfectly, but those subjects which relate to the fine arts, to literature, and the study of the human heart; such were my tastes, and I have never reflected seriously on any other matters. I have also observed, that persons of extraordinary knowledge, and remarkable both for the extent and variety of their information, had always cold imaginations, and were incapable of becoming passionately attached to any particular art or study. About this time I learned to ride, and in a singular manner. I used to bathe; and the water which I employed in bathing was fetched from a river half a league off. A single plough-horse was yoked to the barrel which was to be filled with water. One day, when I was alone at the château, I saw from my window John, the carman, set off on foot, driving his horse. I thought it would be charming for me to mount this great horse, and to go and fetch water for myself.

...AHAL. * THE TAN...

I ran down stairs into the court-yard, and made the proposition to John, who apparently thought it very natural, for, without saying a word, he placed me astride upon the horse's neck, and we set out. I found my ride so agreeable, that for ten or twelve days I took no other exercise. I acquired from this a great love of riding, and I was allowed to mount an old little grey horse, which was still firm in the legs; I got a riding-habit, and I was thought to look so well on horseback, that I got a large and handsome Spanish horse, which, though older than myself, was very swift, and had an excellent footing. Very soon I was told that I rode too fast, but it was in vain that I was forbidden; I could not obey, for my horse regularly ran off with me, in spite of all my attempts to check him; and my ignorance gained me the reputation of inconceivable rashness and folly, in thus risking myself. Some months afterwards, M. Bourgeois, an officer of fortune in garrison at Chaumy, and an excellent rider, finding me perfect in my seat, insisted on giving me lessons, which I took daily for eight months, and became a capital horsewoman. This exercise, of which I was very fond, greatly strengthened my health. We very often went in parties to hunt the wild boar. One day I bethought myself of losing my way on purpose, hoping that I might meet with some extroardinary adventure; and I set off at full speed. I had an excellent horse of

my own, which had been given to me, and which had been chosen by M. Bourgeois. I soon lost myself in the cross roads, taking care to turn my back to the hunters, and to ride away from the sound of the dogs and the horns. Very soon I had the satisfaction to hear nothing of it, and to find myself in a spot altogether unknown to me. I still went on at a gallop; and what I hoped to meet with was a castle, which I had never seen, in which I should find all the inhabitants full of wit and politeness, eager to afford me hospitality. In three hours, still galloping on at random, and looking vainly for a castle, I began to be uneasy; I fancied myself not less than twelve leagues from Genlis, I was hungry, I saw no place where I could repose, and all at once it struck me that at Genlis every one would be in a state of terrible alarm about me; at last, after wandering about for a long while, I met a wood-cutter, who informed me, to my great astonishment, that I was but at three leagues from Genlis. I entreated him to conduct me thither; but I was obliged to walk my horse, and we did not reach Genlis till night-fall. Men on horseback, and blowing horns, had been despatched on all sides through the immense woods of Genlis; M. de Genlis himself was in search of me, and did not return till an hour after me. I was terribly scolded, and I deserved to be so; however, I had the candour to confess that I had lost my way intention-

ally, and I gave my word that I would not, in future, seek to find out unknown territories.

My rashness on horseback has several times threatened to be fatal to me; I am sure, no thoughtless young man was ever more venturous than I in this respect; but with courage and presence of mind one is always safe.

This new passion did not leave me to neglect either my music or my studies; M. de Sauvigny guided me in my reading; I made continual extracts. I had found in the closets a large folio book, intended for keeping the kitchen accounts; I took this book, and wrote in it a long and detailed journal of my occupations and my reflections, with the intention of giving it to my mother when it should be completed.* I wrote in it every day some lines, and sometimes entire pages. Neglecting no sort of information, I endeavoured to have some idea of field-labour, and of gardening; I went to see cider made, and I visited the houses of the village tradesmen when they were at work, the carpenter, the weaver, the basket-maker, &c. I learned to play at billiards, and several games at cards, piquet, reversis, &c. M. de Genlis drew admirably in pen and ink both figures and landscapes; I began to draw and to paint flowers. I wrote a

* The book was in fact filled, and given to my mother; but after her death it could not be found. I regretted it much.—(*Note by the Author.*)

great many letters; once every day to my mother, thrice a week to Madame de Montesson, sometimes to Madame de Bellevau, and pretty often to Madame de Balincour. Besides this, I had a constant interchange of letters with a lady whom I had seen at Origny, who now lived at Valenciennes. I thus acquired a habit of writing with great facility. A poet of my brother-in-law's acquaintance came to spend three months at Genlis; his name was M. Feutry. He was known as the author of a tolerable piece of poetry called *The Tombs*, in which there are several very fine lines.

The same chance which in the course of my life has brought under my eyes so many various and singular scenes, led me to witness at this time a spectacle equally terrible and extraordinary. I have already said that the château of Genlis was surrounded by immense ditches: we had an aged neighbour, the Countess of Sorel, whose house was also surrounded with ditches, and whose château was situated upon an elevated ground, so that the ditches belonging to it were over ours. The Countess of Sorel, through avarice, having refused to make some necessary reparations to the trenches, in spite of the repeated representations of M. de Genlis, their waters, swelled by the rains, suddenly broke through the dilapidated dykes, and ran over into our ditches, which thus overflowed also. Both the Mes-

sieurs de Genlis were hunting, and I was alone at the château. Hearing piercing cries, and a great movement through all the house, I opened my window, which looked out upon the court-yard; what was my horror at seeing that immense court totally filled with water, which rolled in waves with the sound of boiling water: it had already reached the middle of the high windows of the ground floor. The porter, accompanied with several of the servants, ran into my chamber, telling me that I must immediately mount to the garrets, which I did with great precipitation. The bell was rung, the alarm was given, and all the village assembled in a moment, in order to make trenches in the ground to carry off the water, which however swept away several houses which were built on a causeway on the border of the ditches. The water ascended from the court up to the first floor; in the garden it rose to the height of eight feet, as might be seen next day by the marks of clay which it had left on the trees in the alleys. The gardener had sixty bee-hives, which he had not time to save; they were carried away and lost. I saw distinctly from the garret window the whole of this imposing spectacle. No lives were lost, but the damages done were tremendous. Madame de Sorel lost all her fish, which in great part swam into, and remained in our ponds; some remained on the ground and in the

meadows, and were picked up there by the peasants during several days. Madame de Sorel, besides this loss, was obliged to pay twelve thousand francs as damages to the proprietors of the houses which were swept away. My brother-in-law, notwithstanding the heritage of her fish, might have also claimed damages; and if he had enforced it she would have been ruined by this accident, which was entirely caused by her own avarice. I have since seen at Hanbury another inundation. I had witnessed in my childhood, at St. Aubin, a year before quitting it, a great fire caused by lightning, which struck the barns and farm-houses of Sept Fonts, and consumed them in half an hour. I saw distinctly this great fire, which took place directly opposite the great court of our château, and from which we were only separated by the Loire. I have seen the lightning fall very near the ponds of Genlis. At Villers Cobrets one evening, I saw, along with a hundred other persons, the famous globe of fire which caused so much terror that year. I saw at St. Leu, for the second time in my life, an extraordinary storm of hail, and at the arsenal, a column of earth thrown up, which lifted from the ground a young man of fifteen, and threw him five hundred feet forward without killing him. I have suffered a storm at sea; I have seen at Origny a real eclipse of the sun, and I have

witnessed two comets. It was a sort of practical course of natural history, in which nothing was wanting but an earthquake and an irruption of Vesuvius.

In the beginning of the autumn, we went to the house of the Marchioness de Sailly, cousin of M. de Genlis, and daughter of the Marquis de Souvré, brother of M. de Puisieux. The château was ten leagues from Genlis, and I was received with all possible cordiality. I there met M. de Souvré, whom I had seen in my childhood at Madame de Bellevau's. He showed me a thousand marks of friendship, and greatly contributed to hasten the reconciliation of M. de Puisieux and M. de Genlis. From Sailly, we went to Frétoy to the Countess d'Estourmelle's, another relation of M. de Genlis, where we met with the same friendly reception. But, an hour after my arrival, I met with a very disagreeable adventure. Madame d'Estourmelle, then fifty-seven, had an only son, five years old. The Isaac of this modern Sarah, was, of all spoiled children, the most insufferable I ever met with. Every thing was permitted him, nothing was refused him; he was the absolute master of the drawing-room and of the château. M. Emmanuel de Boufflers is the only instance I have since seen to recal to me this singular kind of education. I arrived at Frétoy two hours after dinner, there was a large party from Paris. I had a cottage bonnet, as it was then styled; it was quite new, covered

with beautiful flowers, and fastened on the left side of the head with a great many pins. I was scarcely seated, when the terrible tyrant of the château came and snatched out of my hands a superb fan, and broke it in pieces. Madame d'Estourmelle gave her son a slight reprimand, not for having broken my fan, but for not having asked me for it politely. An instant after, the child went and whispered to his mother that he wanted my bonnet. "Very well, my child," replied Madame d'Estourmelle, very gravely, "go and ask for it very politely." He immediately ran up to me crying "I want your bonnet." He was told that he must not say "*I want*;" and this was what his mother called "passing over none of his faults." She then dictated to him his formula of demand; "Madame, will you have the goodness to lend me your bonnet." Every one in the room cried out against this fancy, but the mother and the son persisted. M. de Genlis ridiculed it with some bitterness, and I saw that Madame d'Estourmelle was about to get angry; I then rose up, and generously sacrificing my pretty bonnet, I went and begged Madame d'Estourmelle to unpin it, which she did in great haste, for the child began to get very violent and impatient. Madame d'Estourmelle embraced me, and praised excessively my mildness, my complaisance, and my fine hair. She insisted that I looked a hundred times better without my bonnet,

though my curls were all deranged, and I looked a very ridiculous figure in full dress, with my hair in disorder. My hat was delivered to the child, on condition of his *not spoiling it*. But in less than ten minutes the bonnet was torn, crushed, and rendered unfit ever to be worn again. I took care, afterwards, to dress my hair simply, and to wear neither bonnet nor flowers. But, unfortunately, this spoiled child was grateful for what I had done; he attached himself to me with unmeasured violence, and refused to quit my side; as soon as I entered the room, he would place himself on my knees, he was very fat and heavy, and not only fatigued me unmercifully, but crumpled my gowns, and even tore them by placing upon them loads of playthings. I could neither speak to any one, nor hear a syllable of any kind of conversation; and it was even impossible for me to get rid of him so long as to play a game at cards. In all my little journeys I carried my harp with me; but here, if any one wished to hear me play, it was impossible, while I sat at the harp, to prevent the child (who kept continually near it) from playing also on the bass strings, which formed a very indifferent accompaniment to my performance. When I had finished, and any one came to take away my harp, the child opposed it with the most horrible cries. The harp was then left, and he played upon it in his own fashion, he scratched some of the cords, broke

others, and soon put the harp completely out of tune. When any one told Madame d'Estourmelle, that her child must annoy me excessively, she would ask me "if that was the case?" and she pretended to take my polite negative in its literal sense, adding, that at my age, one must be charmed to amuse one's self in an infantine manner, and that I formed with her son *a delicious group*. In fact, the child was not so disagreeable as people imagined; not that I loved his frolics, but his person interested and amused me. He was pretty, coaxing, and droll, and he had nothing bad in his disposition. With a tolerable education he might have been easily made a delightful child. His poor mother has largely paid the forfeit of his bad education; the year following this, the child, for the first time in his life, had a little fever; he refused all sorts of drink, and demanded with violence all kinds of improper food; a slight indisposition became a serious disease, and soon a fatal one; for it was impossible to make him take medicine of any description, and all attempts of this kind threw him into fits of passion, that went even to convulsions. He died at the age of six, though he was naturally very stout, and of an excellent constitution!

In returning to Genlis by Peronne, my brother-in-law fell dangerously ill in that town of a putrid fever. M. de Genlis immediately called in the most celebrated physician of the place, who desired to have

a consultation with another physician of Peronne; and the result of this consultation was, that the one declared that if the patient was not bled within twenty-four hours, his death was certain; and the other maintained that bleeding would be fatal. As his brother, and the heir to two hundred thousand francs a-year, (the estate of Genlis, and the reversion of that of Sillery,) M. de Genlis was in a terrible predicament. He made up his mind on the step to be taken without hesitation; my brother-in-law had no confidence in any physician but a German named Weiss; he was at Paris, but we calculated that we could have his answer in twenty-four hours. M. de Genlis, under the dictation of the physicians, wrote an account of the patient's state, and the result of the consultation, and entreated Weiss to come to Peronne, or at least to send him his opinion. He then ordered one of his servants, who was the swiftest courier, to take post horses, to hasten to Paris at full speed, and to return in the same manner. M. Weiss would not undertake the journey to Peronne, but he forwarded an excellent consultation, which expressly prohibited bleeding. The courier returned in nineteen hours; the Marquis de Genlis was saved, and owed his life to his brother. We remained twenty-two days at Peronne, at the inn of the Post. I rode out daily; the ladies of the neighbouring châteaus sent me fruits, fish, vegetables, and flowers; before

quitting Peronne, I went to return them thanks. I ate here excellent pears and peaches. A short time after our return to Genlis, my brother-in-law, scarce yet recovered, went to Paris, and M. de Genlis and I proceeded to Arras, where the regiment of French grenadiers was then stationed. The Count de Guines (afterwards Duke de Guines) had a superb house there, which he lent for my use. I remained there three weeks, and was much amused; they gave me charming entertainments. The officers of the French grenadiers acted to amuse me at the theatre of the town; and I was invited to several dress and masked balls. One of the ensigns, M. de St. P * * *, whom I have since met in society, paid me a great deal of attention; he seized the occasion of a masked ball to approach me without being remarked, and assumed the character of *a dumb person;* he never quitted me during the evening, saying only *ha, ha, ha,* and pointing to his mouth to make me understand that he was dumb. I left Arras at two o'clock in the morning, in order to save a deserter who was to be shot the same day at ten. The Chevalier de Monchat, major in the French grenadiers, was much interested about this unfortunate man; he found means, in concert with M. de Genlis, without compromising himself, to let him escape from prison at eleven at night, and to bring him into our house, where he was concealed in the closet belonging to M. de Genlis. The Count of

Audick gave me a ball and supper, during which my mind was continually absent, and I could think of nothing but our deserter, whom I dreaded might be retaken. I left the ball at half past twelve. We had asked permission of the governor of the town to let us pass at two; for the gates of a fortified town could not be opened at that hour without a special order. M. de Genlis made the deserter put on one of his servant's liveries; we set off at half past one; the deserter was behind the carriage. In passing the gates of the town, I felt the blood freeze in my veins, so great was my sympathy with the situation of the poor deserter. At four leagues from Arras, he found a horse on the high road; we stopped, and he came to the carriage-door to return his thanks; I wept with joy at having saved him! M. de Genlis desired me to salute him, which I did most readily. To have contributed to save the life of a fellow-creature is a happiness which is never to be forgotten.

On arriving at Genlis, letters from Paris informed us that my brother-in-law had relapsed into a dangerous illness. M. de Genlis proceeded immediately to Paris. He promised to write to me, but two posts came without bringing me any intelligence. I then told M. Blanchard that I was very uneasy, and that I was determined to go to Paris. All the carriages were gone, and there only remained a little hunting cart, much broken and in bad condition, and which

besides was in use at the château. I promised only to take it as far as Noyon, (four leagues from Genlis,) saying that I hoped to find in that town a conveyance to hire. M. Blanchard gave me ten louis for my journey, and I set off immediately with Mademoiselle Victoire, and a servant on horseback. The fact is, that it was much less through uneasiness than a desire to go to Paris, that I undertook this journey. I did not in reality expect to find any conveyance at Noyon, but I was determined to go from thence on horseback to Paris, and for that purpose I put on a riding habit and petticoat, which I proposed to quit on arriving at Noyon. On reaching Noyon, at four in the afternoon, in the month of November, the post-master told me there were no coaches, at which I was secretly delighted; I demanded three post horses, one for myself, one for my servant, and one for my maid. At this demand, Mademoiselle Victoire burst out into a laugh, supposing that I asked the horses in jest; but I assured her in a tone so decided, that I was in earnest, at least for my own part, that she could no longer doubt it; she seemed stupefied by the news. I told her however, that she might take her choice about accompanying me, but that I was determined to go in this manner. She had been on horseback at parties of pleasure several times, and had been constantly accustomed to ride on an ass; she was strong and courageous, and I had little

difficulty in persuading her that she would make an admirable horse woman. Lemire, my servant, who was the most serious and the least thinking person in the world, proposed two things, to which I consented; the one was to lend Mademoiselle Victoire a pair of breeches and a great coat, that she might ride, as he said, *decently*, the other that I should wear horseman's boots. He lent me his; but as they were far too large, he filled up the legs with straw very adroitly; then, transported with joy, while Mademoiselle Victoire was dressing, I sent for the post-master and acquainted him with my intention; the man, who was exceedingly attached to M de Genlis, was alarmed at this resolution; and in order to give it a colour, I assured him that an affair of the utmost consequence called me to Paris, and I begged him to let the horses be saddled without delay; he told me that he was going to find an excellent one for me, but that it was not in the house. He searched throughout the town to find me a carriage, and to my great vexation he at last found one, but which had neither windows nor curtains in front. I regretted my large boots, and the glory of riding twenty-five leagues on horseback. Mademoiselle Victoire remained in her male dress; I took off my petticoat, and we travelled thus all night. At each post where we got out, I was delighted at being taken always for a man, and I asked always for ham, in order to make the maid-servants

get up, to whom I talked all sorts of nonsense. Mademoiselle Victoire was not in particularly good humour; it rained in torrents, and she had no hat; I wrapped up her head in a red silk handkerchief. At the first post she got out along with me to warm herself, and in order to imitate me, she chucked one of the maids under the chin, who bluntly said, "You are too ugly." Yet Mademoiselle Victoire was rather handsome: but the dye of the silk handkerchief had come off upon her face, and had given her skin a scarlet colour, which rendered her quite frightful.

M. de Genlis was strangely surprised on my arrival; his brother was out of danger, but still required his attentions, and it was decided that we should remain six weeks at Paris. I saw there my mother, Madame de Montesson, Madame de Boulainvillien, the cousin of M. de Genlis, and the Marchioness of Saint Chamant, sister of Madame de Sillery. I went also to a dress-ball given by the Spanish ambassador. But Madame de Puisieux and her daughter, the Maréchale d'Etrée, still unreconciled to M. de Genlis, persisted in refusing to receive us. In five weeks my brother-in-law was entirely recovered, and began to negociate his marriage with Mademoiselle de Vilmeur, an orphan and rich, the niece of the Chevalier Courten, a Swiss, of whose fortune she was the heiress. We went

from time to time to sup at the house of my aunt de Sarcey, who still lived in the Rue de Rohan. One evening as my husband, my brother, and I were returning home at half past twelve with hired horses, and as we were going slowly up the Rue des fossès M. le Prince, a man came and threw himself before the carriage, crying, that the coachman had thrown him down, which was false and impossible; he stopped the coachman, and loaded him with abuse, and immediately three men came out from an alley and joined him. At this sight our two servants took flight, and M. de Genlis, drawing his sword, sprung out of the carriage, desiring his brother to remain with me; but I entreated the Marquis to go to the assistance of his brother, and seeing him hesitate, I leaped out of the coach, crying to M. de Genlis, "Let no blood be shed—do not strike with the point!" My greatest terror was, that this affray should end in becoming a bloody combat. My brother-in-law drew his sword also; and the robbers fled. If I had been alone in the coach I must have been robbed. This adventure, which M. de Genlis loved to repeat, heightened my character for courage, which was already celebrated by my exploits on horseback.

We returned to Genlis to pass the rest of the winter; and I left it five months gone with child, in the beginning of spring, when we returned to Paris

to celebrate the marriage of my brother-in-law. He married Mademoiselle de Vilmeur, who was then fifteen; the Marquis de Puisieux consented to give away the bride, and my brother-in-law determined that I should stand in the place of her mother, which was singular enough, not only because I was but three years and a half older than the bride, but because it was necessary I should, on that occasion, meet for the first time the head of a family, which had till then treated me with so much rigour. He had to lead me into the church, which he did in a very handsome manner; he was very elegantly dressed, with his blue ribbon passed over his coat; he appeared to me equally dazzling and terrible. As he gave me his hand, he perceived that I trembled; "You are cold, Madam," said he; to which I ingenuously replied, "It is not with cold that I tremble." He has since told me that the tone in which I pronounced these words, affected him almost to tears. The nuptial dinner was celebrated with great magnificence in the country, at the planchette, the seat of the Chevalier Courten; almost all the family was present. Madame de Puisieux, her daughter, the Maréchale d'Etrée, the Princess of Benting, Monsieur and Madame de Noailles, the Duke of Harcourt, and several others. My friends, M. and Madame de Balincour, and Madame de Sailly were not there, nor M. de Souvré; I regretted their absence much. I

was treated with great politeness, but coldly, by all the ladies; I maintained a profound silence. They were all extremely occupied with my sister-in-law, and praised her beauty; Madame de Puisieux and the Maréchale caressed her excessively. I thought I observed that there was a little affectation in all this; and this belief soon removed my timidity. Always when any one has had an intention of affronting me, a feeling of honest pride has elevated me constantly above the insult intended to be offered, by inspiring me with a perfect indifference to it. There happened at this marriage an incident which has been much talked of, and on which has been founded an anecdote, entirely false, which I have seen printed in many shapes. The Count d'Hérouville was the relation and friend of the Chevalier Courten; he had received a card of invitation, but for himself only. He had been married ten years to the famous *Lolotte*, who had conducted herself extremely well since her marriage, but who was visited by none of her own sex. She was then thirty-six years of age, and was still very handsome, and very agreeable; she had a great deal of wit, and her manners were charming. The Count d'Hérouville was foolish enough to bring her along with him; he would have acted more wisely in not coming himself, since his wife was not invited. She was very rudely received, except by the Chevalier Courten, and Messieurs

de Genlis; and during dinner many stinging things were said, of which she could not fail to make the application to herself. Nothing ever distressed me more, she behaved with great propriety.

After dinner, my sister-in-law offered her, as well as the other ladies, a bag and a fan, and saluted her. At this action, which was indispensable, two ladies shrugged their shoulders, and the others showed their astonishment in their faces. All the men then declared for the fair sufferer, and from that moment paid her marked attention. The other women were in turn offended, and the whole scene was very singular. The Chevalier Courten was in torture, as well as M. d'Hérouville, who went away early. As soon as he had quitted the room with his wife, M. de Genlis cried out, "What a beautiful woman Madame d'Hérouville is!" All the other gentlemen then began to eulogize her; every one felt a desire to avenge the treatment she had received. Next day it was said throughout Paris, that at the moment Madame d'Hérouville arrived, the lap-dog of Madame de Puisieux, called *Lolotte*, having come into the room, Madame de Puisieux said aloud, "Go along, Lolotte, you are not fit to come among good company." This is absolutely false; Madame de Puisieux did not bring her dog with her, and nothing of the kind was ever said.

All the company remained till eleven o'clock at

night. The new-married couple, M. de Genlis, and I, passed six days at the house. This short time was sufficient to make me contract a great friendship for my sister-in-law. She was handsome, and her face would have been faultless, but for an unfortunate laugh, which showed teeth by no means beautiful, and gums which were always swelled; but when she did not laugh her face was beautiful and its expression agreeable, which made M. de Villepaton say of her, that, "*seriously speaking*, she was extremely pretty." Her education had been much neglected; but she was never idle; she loved work, embroidered to perfection, and was as dexterous as a fairy. She was very violent and contradictory in her humour, and had the obstinacy of a child, but, at bottom, she was goodnatured, obliging, ingenuous, and very lively. We never had the slightest dispute; and I was delighted to have a companion so amiable and so young.

The Chevalier Courten, the master of the house, and uncle of my sister-in-law, was a witty and agreeable old gentleman of seventy-seven. He had served with much distinction in the army, and in various negociations; he had seen many things, and related them with a charm peculiar to himself. I have never found, in any one of his age, more gaiety, mildness, strength of memory, and pleasantness of manner. He joined to a great acquaintance with society, and

the tone of the French court, great simplicity, and a sort of naïveté, which seemed to belong to the manners of Switzerland, his native country, and this gave to his conversation and to his wit an air of youth and originality, which rendered him the most interesting and amiable of all possible old men.

On quitting La Planchette, we all returned to Genlis. My brother passed that year at Genlis. He had just been received into the engineers, and had undergone his examination in Bezout, with the utmost credit to himself; in fact, he showed a decided genius for the mathematics. I was transported with joy at seeing him again; he was handsome and ingenuous, and he had a sort of childish gaiety which suited my humour exactly. One evening, when there was company at the chateau, and while my sister-in-law and Messieurs de Genlis were playing, after supper, at reversis, my brother proposed to me a walk in the court, which was spacious, covered with sand, and planted all round with flowers, to which I consented. When we reached the court, he expressed a wish to take a walk in the village. I was as willing as he. It was ten o'clock; all the public houses were lighted; and we saw through the windows peasants drinking cider. I observed with surprise that they all wore a very grave air.

My brother was seized with a fit of frolicsome gaiety, and he knocked at a window, crying out,

"Good people, do you sell any *sacré chien?*" and after this exploit, he dragged me after him, as he ran into a little dark street, where we both hid ourselves, ready to die with laughter. Our delight was increased by hearing the tavern-keeper, at the door of his house, threatening to "cudgel the little blackguards" who had knocked at his window. My brother explained to me that *sacré chien* meant brandy. I thought all this so pleasant, that I insisted on going to another little tavern adjoining, to make the same polite enquiry, which met with the same success; we repeated several times that agreeable pastime, trying which of us should say "*sacré chien*," and ending by shouting it together, and every time running off to hide ourselves in the little street, where we burst into fits of laughter till we could hardly stand. Happy age! at which we are so easily transported with gaiety; when nothing has yet exalted the imagination or troubled the heart!

My brother remained six weeks with us. M. de Genlis, with much kindness, made him a present of every thing which could be useful or agreeable to him in a garrison in which he was to remain a long time. He went to Mézières; we promised to write regularly to each other; and we both kept our word.

M. de Genlis returned to Paris in the month of August, and went to live in a pretty house with a garden in the Cul-de-sac Saint Dominique, of which my

brother-in-law had hired the ground floor, and we the first. There I awaited the time of my accouchement. The idea that I was about to become a mother rendered me much more staid. I had commenced, several months before, a work which I entitled *Reflections of a Mother twenty years of age*, though I was then but nineteen. This work, which I lost twenty-five years after, with so many other manuscripts, had nothing romantic in it; I afterwards extracted from it many thoughts and ideas which I transferred to *Adèle and Théodore*. I continued to read history with great application; and for my recreation, I occasionally read poetry and plays. I undertook, at this time, the reading of the voluminous voyages edited by the Abbé Prévost; and I read them all through without missing a line, even of the double narrations.

On the 4th of September I was brought to bed of my dear Caroline, that angelic creature, who was for twenty-two years my happiness and my pride, and whose irreparable loss has caused me the deepest sorrow, and has been the greatest misfortune of my life. She was born beautiful as an angel, and that enchanting face of hers was, from her cradle to her tomb, the most faultless the world ever saw. I did not suckle her, for it was not then the fashion; besides, I could not have done so in my situation, as we were always obliged to pay visits and undertake

little journeys. She was nursed at two short leagues from Genlis, at a village called Comanchon. How many sentiments, till then unknown, sprung up in my breast, with the blessing of being a mother! how I loved my child! how dear life became to me! and with what an anxious interest I cast my eyes to the future, to which my thoughts had never before turned! I discovered in my child a new existence, a thousand times preferable to my own!

Nine days after my confinement, the Maréchale d'Etrée came to see me, and brought me as a present some very fine Indian stuffs. She assured me that her father and mother would receive me with pleasure, and that Madame de Puisieux would present me at court as soon as I should be able to leave my room. In five weeks after I went to pay a visit to Madame de Puisieux, whom I dreaded extremely; and as during my whole life I have never made advances to any one who has treated me with coldness or indifference, I was very silent and cold in my turn. I did not make a very favourable impression on her at this interview. Eight days after, she carried me to Versailles; and, to complete the tortures of the journey, it was tête-a-tête with her in her own carriage. She talked to me of nothing but the manner in which my head was to be dressed, advising me, with a critical air, not to wear my hair so high as I usually did, assuring me, that it would be very dis-

agreeable to the princesses and the old queen. I replied merely, "It is enough, madam, that it is displeasing to you." This answer appeared to be agreeable to her; but immediately after I relapsed into my former silence, and I saw that it annoyed her extremely. At Versailles, we resided in the splendid apartments of the Marshal d'Etrée; I was delighted with the marshal; I looked upon him with a lively interest; I knew that he had achieved numerous victories in the field, and that he was one of the wisest statesmen at the council-board. He joined to his honours the most unaffected simplicity and perfect goodness of heart. Mesdames de Puisieux and d'Etrée really persecuted me the day following, which was that of my presentation; they made me dress my head three different times, and fixed upon the mode which became me the least, and which was the most gothic of them all. They obliged me to wear a great deal of rouge and powder, two things which I detested; they insisted on my wearing my full dress body for dinner, in order, as they said, to accustom me to it; these *bodies* left the shoulders uncovered, cut the arms, and were horribly tight; besides this, in order to show my shape, they made me lace myself till I could scarcely suffer the pressure.

The mother and daughter had next a bitter dispute on the subject of my ruff, and on the manner in which it should be fastened; they were seated, and I

was standing up quite worn out, and provoked during their debate. The ruff was fastened on and taken off at least four times; at last the maréchale carried the day by the decision of her three waiting maids, which gave great offence to Madame de Puisieux. I was so exhausted that I could scarcely support myself when I had to go to dinner. I was allowed to go without my large hoop, though the ladies had at one time thought of making me wear that too in order to accustom me to it. When the marshal saw me, he cried out, "She is far too much powdered and rouged; she was a hundred times handsomer yesterday." Madame de Puisieux appealed to him about my ruff, which he approved of; and all dinner time nothing was discussed but my dress. I ate almost nothing, for I was so tight-laced that I could hardly breathe. On quitting the table, the marshal passed into his closet, and I was left to Madame de Puisieux and the maréchale, who made me finish my toilette, that is to say, put on my hoop and my train, then rehearse my curtsies, for which I had taken a master; it was Gardel, who at that time taught the court. The ladies were extremely well pleased with my performance; but Madame de Puisieux forbade me to push back the train of my gown by sliding my foot gently under it, as I withdrew backwards, saying that *it had a theatrical air*. I represented to her that if I did not

push back my long train, my feet would get embarrassed in it, and that I should fall down; she only repeated, in a dry and imperious tone, that *it was theatrical*, to which I replied not a word. Afterwards the ladies began to dress themselves, and I availed myself of this to remove adroitly some of my rouge, but unfortunately, just as we were setting out, Madame de Puisieux perceived it, and said, "Your rouge is come off, but I shall put on more;" and taking from her pocket a patch-box, she plastered my face with rouge more deeply than before. My presentation went off very well, and the day was well-chosen, as a great many ladies were at this levee. Louis XV. spoke a good deal to Madame de Puisieux, and said many flattering things about me. Though no longer young, he appeared to me very handsome; his eyes were of a deep blue, *royal blue eyes*, as the Prince of Conti said; and his look was the most imposing that can be imagined. In speaking he had a laconic manner, and a particular brevity of expression, in which there was nothing harsh or disobliging; in short, there was about his whole person something majestic and royal, which completely distinguished him from all other men. A handsome exterior in a king is by no means a matter of indifference; the people and the great bulk of the nation can see but by stealth, as it were, the great potentates of the earth; they regard them with eager curiosity; the impression they re-

ceive from that examination is indelible, and exercises the greatest influence over all their sentiments. A noble air, a frank expression of countenance, a serene aspect, an agreeable smile, mild and polished manners, are precious gifts to princes, which education may confer but to a certain degree. Brutal or contemptuous manners produce the hatred of their subjects; if they have a gloomy or anxious air they inspire mistrust and dread; if they have a mean or ridiculous appearance, they are despised—especially in France, where the lowest individuals of the populace have the finest and truest tact for seizing all the shades which express by the tone, the gestures, or the look, the various emotions of the mind.

The Dauphin, the son of Louis XV. was just dead, and the court was in deep mourning. I was presented to the old queen, the daughter of Stanislaus, king of Poland; that princess, already attacked with the disease (a decline) of which she died fifteen or eighteen months after, was reclining on a sofa. I was much struck at seeing her wear a lace night-cap, with large diamond ear-rings. She interested me extremely, because it was said to be the death of her son which was carrying her to the tomb. She was a charming old woman; she had still a very pretty face, and a ravishing smile. She was gracious and obliging, and the soft tone of her voice, which had a languor in it, went directly to the heart. Her whole

conduct had ever been distinguished by irreproachable purity; she was pious, good, and charitable; she loved literature, and was a discriminating patroness of men of letters. She had great quickness of talent; and many exquisite sayings of her's have been quoted. I was afterwards presented to the princesses, and to the rest of the royal family; and in the evening I went to the card-room of the princesses. I was also introduced to Madame de Civrac,* the maid of honour to the Princess Victoire. Her husband was under great obligations to M. de Puisieux, who had caused him to be appointed ambassador to Vienna, where he then was. Madame de Civrac was delightful, from her frankness and her good-nature. In spite of extreme timidity, I soon found myself at my ease with her; and I cultivated her friendship up to the period of her death. A few days after my presentation we returned to Genlis. I there passed the summer very agreeably; we acted plays at the theatre, decorated by the Chevalier Don Tirmane, where we had already played several pieces. In the course of that summer we acted *Nanine*, *The Précieuses Ridicules*, *The Méchant*, and *The Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*;

* This is not the lady whom I have mentioned at the beginning of these memoirs; the husband of the above was Civrac de Durfort, father of the Duke of Lorges, and of Madame de Donnisan, who, as well as her daughter, played so conspicuous a part in La Vendée during the Revolution.—(*Note by the Author.*)

the best performers were Monsieur de Genlis and myself; my sister-in-law, notwithstanding all my lessons, could not act well, but she made no pretension to this kind of talent. We had the neighbours and the peasants for audience. The sentimental scene of gratitude with Nanine and her father produced shouts of laughter, when the spectators discovered in the person of Philippe Humbert, one of our neighbours of thirty-five or thirty-six years of age, whose white wig, which he had assumed to give him the appearance of an old man, seemed to them the most comical thing in the world. M. le Pelletier de Morfontaine, the superintendant of Soissons, came to our performances. I had just then heard of the institution of the Rosiere of Salency;* I spoke of it with enthusiasm to M. de Morfontaine, and it was decided that we should go to Salency to crown the Rosiere. I presented the Rosiere with a dress and a cow, and M. de Morfontaine gave her an annuity for life. He had sent for musicians, and gave a very charming ball in a barn, beautifully decorated with coloured lamps, leaves, and garlands of roses. Messieurs de Sauvigny, Feutry, and de Genlis, wrote some pretty couplets upon the fête;

* In some parts of France, the girl who is most remarkable in the village for her good conduct and modesty, is presented by the judge of the district with *a rose*, and is thence called the Rosiere. —(*Translator.*)

those of M. de Genlis were sent to Paris, where they were found so agreeable, that they were inserted in the Mercury. There was one of them which was addressed to me; and I confess that when I saw it in print, I was much more flattered than when I heard it sung in the barn of Salency.

As M. de Genlis had caused my harp to be carried to Salency, I played on it in the barn before the ball, which produced among the worthy inhabitants of Salency and its musicians an inexpressible enthusiasm; M. Feutry wrote, on this occasion, the following couplet, which I only quote, because it was really an impromptu;

Sur l'air: De tous les capucins du monde.

Genlis, votre harpe magique
Efface l'instrument antique
Dont on nous vante les succès.
Par lui Saül vit disparoître
Et ses transports et ses accès,
Et vous en faites ici naître.

In consideration of the song, the fête, and the appropriateness of the time chosen for the compliment, I forgave M. Feutry that eternal comparison about Saul and David, which caused me in general so much annoyance. There are moments when every thing pleases; we should seize them when we may. All which belongs to that day's amusement has left be-

hind it a delicious recollection, on which I love to dwell!

M. de Sauvigny wrote a poem in prose, called the *Rosiere of Salency*, which he dedicated to me; afterwards I wrote a comedy on the same subject, which is to be found in my *Theatre of Education*. Seven or eight years afterwards, the Rosiere of Salency had a lawsuit with the lord of the manor, who unreasonably refused to give his hand to lead the Rosiere to church, and furnish the crown of roses and the blue sash, in memory of that which Louis XIII., when at Varennes, near Salency, sent to the Rosiere by a captain of his guards. The virtuous prior of Salency made a journey to Paris about this absurd lawsuit; he called upon me and related the story; upon which I wrote a memorial which I gave the prior; this memorial was presented to the council and the Rosieres gained their plea. The memorial was written in the name of the prior; he presented it to the queen, who interested herself warmly in the affair. In gratitude for what M. de Morfontaine had done for the Rosieres I promised to go and visit him at Soissons; I went there with M. de Genlis; and we passed a fortnight at the house of M. de Morfontaine, amidst a constant round of entertainments. I saw there, for the first time, Dorat, with whom I was extremely taken, not because he wrote beautiful verses about me, but because he had, in reality, agreeable and elegant

manners, and because he spoke sensibly, the rarest thing in the world among men of wit. M. de Morfontaine did a great deal of good among the persons under his management; his sentiments were generous, he was a man of talent, he was polite, and magnificent; he loved the arts, and persons of ability; but he had the mania of making verses, and the misfortune always to compose bad ones.

From Soissons we returned to Genlis, where I recommenced my occupations with fresh ardour. As Messieurs de Genlis went almost daily on shooting parties, my sister-in-law and I were often alone; we went constantly to Comanchon to see my dear little Caroline; my sister-in-law in a cabriolet, and I on horseback. My sister-in-law did not prove *enceinte*, and so far from being jealous of my having a charming infant, she was fond of my Caroline even to folly; a sentiment which she has always preserved, and which of itself, would have been sufficient to attach me to her. When we were alone at the château, which often happened, we both worked at embroidery; and the steward, M. Blanchard, read to us aloud. He read to us in this way a part of the *Roman History* of Laurent Echard, and the *Spectacle de la Nature* of Pluche, which began to give me a taste for natural history. I made a little girl gather for me all the insects that she found in the fields. She brought us a large box, which we unluckily opened in my bed-room, and out of it

crawled enormous spiders, large earth-worms, frogs, toads, &c. At the sight of these monsters, we took flight, extremely discouraged in our pursuit of the study of natural history. For more than a fortnight, though great pains had been taken to remove all these insects from my room, I still found some now and then; however, we continued the reading of the *Spectacle de la Nature*. M. Blanchard next read to us the *Théâtre* of Fagan, an ingenious and witty author, whose comedies pleased us exceedingly. Besides these *readings aloud*, I read in my room, while they combed my long hair, which was a long operation, and while my head was dressing, the *Ancient History* of Rollin, the lively comedies of Dufresny, and afterwards those of Marivaux, for the second time. I confess that I was excessively fond of that author; he was perfectly acquainted with *the secrets of the female heart*, and he has unfolded them with a delicacy and a grace which are to be found in no other *male* author. He is inimitable when he paints the caprices, the inconsistencies, and the violence of a woman agitated by vexations arising out of a little affection and a great deal of self-love; this was all he knew, but he knew it well. Nevertheless, Moliere, who has observed every thing, has depicted something of the same sort in his *Princesse Elide*, which is also *a surprise of affection*. The style of Marivaux is often full of mannerism; but by a dexterity of wit,

which was peculiar to him, it becomes not so much affectation as originality; and often, also, in his dialogue, which is always ingenious and sparkling, there are charming touches, at once fine, natural, and full of a certain piquant ingenuousness. Ten years after the period to which I allude, I was no longer the same passionate admirer of Marivaux that I then was; I thought he had spoiled a great number of writers; but I thought him then, and I think him still, an author far above mediocrity. He has admirably caught the most delicate shades of various sentiments and various habits, and in the art of observing things, and in depicting them well, he has infinitely surpassed Sterne, and many authors who have been since admired, both in France and in England. Without mentioning the comedies of Marivaux, we may safely assert that in his novels—his *Mariane* and his *Paysan Parvenu*, there are many scenes far superior to any parts, even the *best* of the *Sentimental Journey*.

I had still preserved my taste for teaching, and I exerted it for the benefit of a little girl called Rose, daughter of the dairy-maid of the château: I took her into my service, and as she seemed to have a taste for music, I taught her to play upon the harp; but my instrument was enormously large, and in the course of six months I perceived that my pupil was becoming humpbacked: I therefore renounced my

plan of giving her this accomplishment; and I ordered for her from Paris a pair of whalebone stays, with a little plate of lead placed on the side of the shoulder which threatened to be crooked. In three months her shape was perfectly restored, and even became in the end very handsome. I also gave my sister-in-law lessons of singing; but she had no voice: I was more fortunate in giving her lessons of spelling, with which she was but indifferently acquainted: I taught her orthography completely in three months. On her side, she taught me to embroider, an art in all its branches of which she excelled; in her it was a real talent, and I have never been able to come near the perfection of her work; she was also very skilful in working tapestry. She had nothing of what is called wit; she did not say fine things; but she was far from being stupid: she had even naturally a very fair capacity; for example, she calculated, for her age, in a remarkable manner, and with a facility to which I could never attain; and in the end she showed very great intelligence in matters of business. She had naturally a very good disposition; without any other defects than a childishness, which led her to be somewhat obstinate and contradictory. At the same time, she took an interest, and with warmth, in every thing in which others were interested, whether it was a serious matter, or a frolic of gaiety. Our readings interested her deeply,

at the same time if I proposed to her a school girl's frolic, she would join in it with all her heart. There was at Genlis the largest bathing machine I ever saw: four people could easily have bathed in it. One day I proposed to my sister-in-law, that we should both bathe ourselves in it in milk, and that we should go into the neighbourhood, and buy all the farmers' milk. We dressed ourselves in the disguise of peasant girls, and mounted on asses, led by John the carman, my first riding master; we left Genlis at six in the morning, and went to the distance of two leagues all round to bespeak all the milk at the little farm houses, desiring them to bring it next morning to the château of Genlis. In the cottages where we were afraid of being recognized, we waited for John at a little distance, and entered into all the others. We took a milk bath, which is the most delightful thing in the world; we had caused the surface of the bath to be strewed over with rose leaves, and we remained two hours in that charming bath.

I composed at this time a little novel, entitled, "*The Dangers of Celebrity:*" four or five years after I lost the manuscript: the idea of it was moral, but, as far as I can remember it, the novel was tiresome.

I had been very happy at Genlis, especially from the time of my brother-in-law's marriage; but my brother insisted upon paying him a small annual sum;

and I could not have been more absolute mistress, if the château had been my own, thanks to the attentions of my brother-in-law and his wife. My sister-in-law, at an age when a young woman loves to act *the mistress of the house*, had nothing of that passion: she desired, with all the kindness of a good disposition, that I should command in her château as freely as herself; she never suffered the servants, in speaking of her, to call her merely *Madame;* she made them mention her by her title, and me by mine. These are little matters, but they deserve to be mentioned; for they are proofs of noble and delicate sentiments. My sister-in-law had religious principles, and a taste for occupation; she was incapable of envy or malice; with a very handsome face, she was not a coquette; she sincerely loved her husband; and she wanted nothing to make her a person of merit and of exemplary conduct, but a more *moral* and faithful husband.

I constantly practised medicine at Genlis, with my *Tissot* in my hand, and in concert with M. Racine, the village barber, who always came gravely to consult me when he had any patients. We went to visit them together; all my prescriptions were confined to simple drinks, and to broth, which I regularly sent from the château. My practice served at least to moderate M. Racine's rage for emetics, which he prescribed for almost all kinds of diseases. I was

perfect in the art of bleeding; the peasants often came to beg me to let blood of them, but when it became known that I always gave them twenty-four or thirty sous after bleeding, I had very soon a great number of patients, who were attracted, I began to suspect, by the thirty sous. I then ceased to bleed but by the prescription of M. Millett, the surgeon of La Fère, who came to Genlis every eight or ten days.

The only property which M. de Genlis then had, was the estate of Sissy, five leagues from Genlis; it was worth ten thousand francs a year, which are equal to twenty thousand at present; we did not spend five thousand out of this, so that we were completely at our ease, and M. de Genlis, who was full of goodness and humanity, did a vast deal of good in the village; my brother-in-law and his wife were also extremely generous, and were in return adored by the peasants.

One morning, when sitting alone in my room, I was told that a pretty young woman belonging to Sissy wished to speak with me. I desired her to be brought in, and I saw in reality a young country girl of sixteen, beautiful as an angel. She threw herself in tears at my feet, but refused to explain what she wanted. I lifted her up, and kissed her with a tenderness which gave her confidence, and she then confessed that she had been seduced by our gamekeeper, who was forty-five years old, and who

had promised to marry her; that she was with child, and that he now refused to keep his word because she had nothing; and she added with sobs, "I have now nothing to do, but to throw myself into the river!" I consoled her as well as I could, and made her remain at the château. I went and related the history to my sister-in-law, and we both spoke about it to my husband, who, in his anger, wished to discharge his gamekeeper. We made him perceive that this would be the ruin of the poor girl, and it was finally agreed that he should give her a marriage portion; that I should give her the bride-clothes and a little outfit; that my sister-in-law should give her a lace cap and a gold cross, and my brother-in-law three pair of coarse sheets. M. de Genlis immediately sent for his gamekeeper, who was quite unprepared. . . . We were curious, my sister-in-law and I, to see the seducer. He appeared to us very old, but he was tall; he had a good air, and wore a green dress, laced with silver; he had also a military look, which was sufficient to give him an advantage over all the youths of the village. M. de Genlis, on seeing him, felt his anger rise, and without any preamble, he bluntly addressed him thus—"You are a scoundrel. . . . I give you three hundred francs and a cow. . . ." This singular opening gave us a great inclination to laugh; the gamekeeper grew pale with surprise, fear, and joy; and when the affair was explained to him,

and all that had been done for the girl, he appeared in an ecstacy of pleasure. I have never seen any thing more touching than the gratitude and the joy of the poor girl. M. de Genlis sent them back to Sissy, to have the banns published, and fixed their marriage-day at three weeks from thence, promising to come with me to the nuptials, which we did. On the day appointed, we quitted Genlis on horseback, at day break; on arriving at Sissy, we were received by a cavalcade, which came to meet us, composed of the *notables* of the village; and they almost killed me by firing *in honour of me* a gun which was overcharged. The discharge threw me backwards, but luckily the gun did not burst. I was not wounded however, and the accident did not prevent me from dancing at the wedding. We did not return to Genlis till night had completely set in.

The Chevalier de Barbantane came to Genlis this year; he was the brother of the Marquis of Barbantane, of the Palais Royal, and was as amiable as his brother was disagreeable. To a great deal of wit, he joined a frank and rallying gaiety, a delightful manner of telling a story, and a most estimable disposition. His sallies, always lively and pleasant, contrasted singularly with his grave and stately air, and with his features, which had something severe about them. He was then thirty-six or thirty-seven. He was a great lover of music; my harp enchanted

him; and this commenced between us a friendship which lasted up to the revolution.

About the second or third of August, M. de Genlis and I went to Rheims, on a visit to my grandmother, the Marchioness of Droménil, who knowing that M. de Genlis was reconciled with M. and Madame de Puisieux, consented at last to receive us. Madame de Puisieux was this year at Vaudreuil, at the house of the president Portail, so that we did not go to Sillery. Madame de Droménil had acquainted her grandson, in her letter, that she could not let us stay with her longer than a week. I met the respectable grandmother of my husband with equal tenderness and respect; she was eighty-seven years of age, extremely small, but perfectly well proportioned; her little hands and feet seemed to belong to a child of six; her features equally delicate; and her mouth so small, that she had a spoon, knife and fork for her own peculiar use, all the articles of furniture she used were made on purpose for her: she had her little tongs, her little arm-chair, her high chair, on which she sat at table; and the sweet little tones of her voice were suited to this interesting miniature. She had once been very pretty; and she still preserved a very sweet and good-humoured physiognomy. She was not deaf; her sight was good; she walked well, and had no kind of infirmity; her memory was excellent; she was lively; she had a delicate and

agreeable kind of wit, and an admirable heart. She looked to me like a good and beneficient fairy; on seeing me she rose up, and stretched out her arms to me; I was touched with the tenderest emotions; I ran towards her, and, to receive her embrace, I knelt upon my knees, and, in that position, I reached her head; she embraced me several times, and then, turning towards M. de Genlis, she said, "My dear grandson, you have made a good choice; she is charming." I soon found myself at my ease with her. I sat down by her, and held her little hands in mine; I caressed her with the same feeling as if I was caressing an infant, mingled with the veneration which such an age inspires. After dinner my harp was unpacked, and I played upon it as much as she pleased. She had received on a visit, the year preceding, her two grand-daughters, Mesdames de Belzance and de Noailles, daughters of the Marquis of Droménil, brother of the late Marchioness of Genlis, my mother-in-law; she told me that I was infinitely more agreeable to her than those ladies; yet Madame de Belzance, who died very soon after of consumption, was lovely as an angel, and mild and charming in her manners and disposition. In the evening, Madame de Droménil made me the same present she had made to her two grand-daughters; she gave me one hundred louis in a beautiful purse, which I received with pleasure, in order to give them to M. de

Genlis. She became so much attached to me, that in place of a week, she kept me with her two months, which I passed very agreeably. Madame de Droménil received at her house all the best society of Rheims, among whom I found many agreeable persons; she was also visited by many of the canons of the cathedral; and as she was very proud of my talent for the harp, she made me play what she called a little air at each visit. I was at several balls given in the town; and Madame de Droménil gave two at her own house. Almost every morning she carried me to the promenade in the public walk; she rode in her carriage, and I on horseback; I kept by the door of the coach, and talked quantities of nonsense to her, which made her laugh till the tears came into her eyes; all the childishness which I had naturally in my disposition seemed charming to her. Often at her own house, I took her in my arms, and carried her like a child into my room, and through all the house, for she was as light as a feather; all that I did pleased and enlivened her. She showed me every thing interesting and curious that the town contained; its fine churches, the shaking pillar, and its splendid manufactories.

At the end of two months I took leave of Madame de Droménil. She was so grieved to lose me, and I loved her so affectionately, that I should have remained with her a month longer, had I not pro-

mised to Madame de Boulainvilliers that I would go and pass the autumn at her château of Grisolles in Normandy. I wept much on quitting this best and most amiable of grandmothers. M. de Genlis gave her his word that he would bring me back the following spring. I shall never forget that Madame de Droménil made my coach be loaded with gingerbread and pears. I left Rheims full of gratitude for her kindness and affection for herself.

In going to Grisolles the axletree of our carriage broke. The shock was very violent; my maid, who was on the front seat of the coach, fell heavily upon M. de Genlis, and with her head, which struck against M. de Genlis, she blackened his eye in the most horrid manner, and received no accident herself. M. de Genlis was exceedingly vexed about his black eye; for it had been agreed, that we were to act plays on our arrival at Grisolles, and he had to perform two parts of *lovers*, which he had thoroughly studied. M. de Boulainvilliers, son of Samuel Bernard, so famous for his immense wealth, had just been appointed provost of Paris, which was a very excellent place. He had married a cousin of M. de Genlis. Madame de Boulainvilliers was then thirty-five or thirty-six; she had been very pretty, and her face was still very elegant and agreeable; she had a spotless reputation, a graceful wit, and a most generous and feeling heart. She had three daughters;

the eldest, afterwards Baroness de Crussol, was at that time fourteen or fifteen; she had neither the talent nor the agreeable manners of her mother; she was considered handsome by her family; she had one of those faces which seem lovely in description, but which are only beautiful, because in describing them we suppress every thing depreciatory. She was tall and thin; she was very fair; she had large eyes and a small mouth; but her figure was stiff, and her shape somewhat twisted; her complexion was pale and white, her eyes round and staring, her face entirely devoid of expression, and her whole physiognomy of grace. Her second sister, who married M. de Faudoas, was ugly. The third, who married M. de Tonnerre, and who was then six years old, was quite charming, and has always been remarkable for her beauty, talents, and excellent disposition. As for M. de Boulainvilliers, he was by no means beloved in society; but he always seemed to me a very worthy man, who did the honours of his house extremely well. He was said to be a splendid miser; which generally signifies a person who is believed to combine saving habits and regularity in his housekeeping with an appearance of show and magnificence.

M. de Genlis, who had, as I have stated, got a violent blow on the head when the axletree broke, felt next day such a sensation of heaviness and burn-

ing about it, that he sent for the surgeon of the place and had himself bled. He had a room next to mine; the next day he called me early, and made me feel his head, which was quite as hot as before, and he desired me to bleed him a second time, because the surgeon had made two punctures the preceding night before succeeding in drawing blood. I replied that I should be afraid to bleed him, and that I was sure my emotion would render my hand unsteady. Being extremely uneasy, I felt the crown of his head again, where all the heat seemed to be; and in doing so, I touched the wall against which the head of the bed stood, and burnt my hand; or at least I felt as if it were burnt, so great was the heat. It was a warm stove which passed by the wall, and which was lighted very early every morning, it being then extremely cold, though it was but the beginning of October; and this was the sole cause of the sensation of pain in the head, for which M. de Genlis was about to make himself be bled a a second time.

We proceeded to act our plays. I played Lisette in *Les Jeux de l'Amour et du Hasard;* and Madame de Boulainvilliers played Silvia very agreeably. The parts of Dorante and Bourguignon were ably filled by Messieurs de Genlis; my brother and sister-in-law arrived at Grisolles a few days after us. All the gentry of the neighbourhood, many inhabitants of

the neighbouring towns, and a great number of officers in garrison, composed our audience, which was very numerous; our theatre contained five hundred persons, and was always full. We played for our afterpiece *Zénéide;* my sister-in-law played that part, and I Olinde, which is a character that a woman may personate, as it is quite enveloped in a long domino. We gave three representations, which were all followed by balls. At this château I first became acquainted with M. de Chambray, who had an estate five leagues off. M. de Chambray was a man of great learning and information, an excellent naturalist, and well versed in natural philosophy; he lived retired on his estate, where he occupied himself solely with his studies, and the education of his daughter, a charming girl of sixteen, and his son, who was in his sixteenth year. I became much attached to Mademoiselle de Chambray, whose information was astonishing for her age. She inspired me in this respect with a lively desire of emulation, for she surpassed me infinitely. She confirmed me in my nascent tastes for the study of natural history. I rode on horseback a good deal at Chambray. On the 15th of November my brother-in-law and his wife, with M. and Madame de Boulainvilliers, returned to Paris; M. de Genlis and I went to Chambray, where we passed five weeks in the most agreeable solitude. I arrived there more than three

months *enceinte,* but through a peculiarity of constitution, I was not at all aware of it; and what was equally singular, I met with no ill consequences from riding out daily in a magnificent forest of fir-trees. I played a great deal on the harp; and passed whole hours with Mademoiselle de Chambray in her cabinet of natural history, of which the collecting had occupied her father ten years; she explained every thing to me in the most luminous manner. She had also made a particular study of geography; had read a prodigious number of voyages; and her conversation, which was free from all kind of pedantry, was as agreeable as instructive to me.

We passed the winter at Paris; I was then twenty. I went once a week to dine at my aunt's, Madame de Montesson, or with the Marchioness de la Haie, my grandmother. These latter dinners were by no means to my taste; my grandmother treated me with extreme coldness; and as she wore on her face an enormous quantity of red and white, and painted her eyebrows and died her hair "to conceal the irreparable ravages of years," her appearance was far from respectable in my eyes. She had with her an unmarried sister, Madame Dessaleux, who was as good and kind as my grandmother was imperious and haughty; yet these two sisters were models of perfect friendship. Madame de Montesson treated me with great kindness, and caressed me excessively,

but never endeavoured to show me to advantage in the eyes of my grandmother, who, on her side, never asked me either to sing or to play on the harp. Besides these dinners, I went from time to time to my grandmother's in the morning, while she was at her toilette; it was the hour she allotted for receiving me; and I always found her before her glass and surrounded by her women; she treated me with the most fatiguing sermons I have ever heard: as she had nothing to say on the *present*, she preached to me about the *future;* I never answered a word, and when she had exhausted all the common-places which she was constantly in the habit of repeating, and the last pin of her head-dress was fixed, she used to rise up and dismiss me. At my grandmother's I met a celebrated man of letters, who was already attacked with the disease (consumption) of which he died a few years afterwards; this was Colardeau, who, in my opinion, has left behind him a reputation infinitely above his merits as a poet. A middling tragedy, and a pretty translation of a fine English Epistle, (that of Eloisa to Abelard,) were not sufficient to raise him to the high reputation which the world, as if by common consent, has agreed to allow him. But he had many friends among persons in high life; he had a mild and pliant disposition, and his talents were not brilliant enough to excite envy; he had just enough of talent *to*

please, and this is the kind of ability which commands universal success. His translation of the epistle of Eloisa to Abelard is vastly inferior to the original of Pope; it even contains some absurd lines, such as these:

> "Quoi! faudra-t-il toujours aimer, se repentir,
> Désirer, espérer, désespérer, sentir,"* etc.

This translation, in general, is remarkable for harmonious versification; but we have had since a thousand pieces in verse which are as good as this, and which are forgotten. Colardeau was mild in his manners in company, but his conversation was common-place; he was sombre, and somewhat dull. The day of the week on which I dined with my aunt, or my grandmother, Madame de Montesson, took me to pay visits in the evening to the Princesses de Chimay; the one who was afterwards maid of honour to the Queen was still handsome, and an angel in point of mildness and character; we also visited the Duchess of Mazarin, Madame de Gourgue, the Marchioness de Livri, the Duchess of Chaulnes, and the Countess de la Massais, a lady of great wit and amiability; our day always finished by going to sup

* We do not say, *faudra-t-il toujours désespérer*, we must say, *se désespérer*; and what does *faudra-t-il sentir* signify? feel what? *(Note by the Author.)*

with one of the three last named ladies, or with Madame de la Reynière, the wife of the farmer-general.* She was a person thirty-five years old, full of vapours, extremely annoyed at not having married a courtier, but handsome, obliging, and polite; always complaining of her health, but never complaining of any person, and doing the honours of her house with great liberality and grace. My aunt, though she was always very well received by this lady, was not by any means fond of her; and I perceived that almost all the ladies of the court, about her own age, who went to Madame de la Reynière's, endeavoured to make her appear ridiculous; I tried to discover the reason of this, and though I had as yet so little experience, I found it out. All these ladies were, in their hearts, envious of the beauty of Madame de la Reynière, of the extreme magnificence of her establishment, and of the elegant splendour of her toilette. This discovery grieved my heart, and led me to make melancholy reflections on the conduct of the world. Madame de La Reynière saw the best company; she had a very intimate friend, the Countess of Melfort, a very handsome person, by whom she was sincerely esteemed. She was also in habits of strict friendship with the Marchioness of Tessé: the latter, who is still alive, has some wit, but knows it too well, and is too fond of showing it; and in order

* Who is still alive, (1813.)—(*Note by the Author.*)

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SA...

to give her hearers a higher opinion of it, she speaks a language peculiar to herself, which, to understand, sometimes requires an interpreter; she, and the younger Madame d'Egmont, are the last of the race of *affectedly nice* ladies, whom I have seen in the great world; affected airs and patches were already out of fashion among women of my age. M. de Tessé was the coldest and most taciturn person I have ever met with. He built a fine château at Chaville, between Paris and Versailles; and a few years after the period to which I allude, he wore constantly a snuff-box, decorated with a miniature, representing the château at Chaville; beneath which was this verse from the tragedy of *Phèdre:*

"Je lui bâtis un temple ut pris soin de l'orner."

—which signified that he had built Cheville for Madame de Tessé; thus comparing himself to Phædra, agitated with the transports of love, and Madame de Tessé, who was forty, and who was any thing but handsome, to Venus, *toute entière à sa proie attachée.* This inscription excited much laughter, especially from its being chosen by M. de Tessé, a man of fifty, who certainly had never been in love. As for M. de la Reynière, he was an excellent man, who loved talent and the arts, kept an elegant establishment, and gave the best suppers in Paris; but he had some oddities, which however have been

greatly exaggerated. Of all the persons to whom my aunt introduced me, those to whose houses I liked best to go were Madame de la Reynière and Madame de la Massais: I commenced a friendship with them, which lasted until my removal to Belle Chasse. I met at Madame de la Reynière's several very agreeable men. One was the Abbé Arnauld, whose Provençal accent, open air, his vivacity, and his gaiety, rendered his conversation very amusing, and gave a natural tone to all he said, though he had a good deal of affectation in his language as well as his writings; but he had many excellent qualities, a great equality of temper, and an inviolable secrecy as to all that passed in society; but he was violent in his enmities, and wrote the most bitter epigrams against his enemies. The Count d'Albaret was also a particular friend of Madame de la Reynière. Madame Necker, in her *Souvenirs*, has most unjustly ridiculed him; in the first place, because he had nothing ridiculous about him; he was good-humoured, pleasant, witty, and had a great number of agreeable accomplishments; he loved the arts passionately, and was a good judge of them; he was extremely gay; he was a person who seemed always determined to amuse himself, and to please his friends, and succeeded, by means of his talents, his good temper, and his great complaisance in society; but his complaisance never went farther than it ought. He had

the happiest possible disposition, both for himself and others; he never sought the acquaintance of any persons but those whose company was agreeable to him; his gaiety of humour never led him to say any thing malignant; and he never committed a mean action. He was a person of fortune, and gave at his own house little concerts, which were delicious; he received none but the best company; his morals were perfectly pure. This was styled a frivolous kind of existence; as for me, I think it far happier and more amiable, than a life devoted to the acquisition of wealth, or the intrigues of ambition.

I saw this year, (1766,) the Abbé Delille, who had just published his beautiful translation of Virgil's Georgics. He was at that time twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age. He visited me several times; he was then engaged with his translation of the Æneid. I thought him ingenuous and amiable; he had a face of a certain intelligent ugliness, which it was amusing to examine; at this time he recited verses in a manner that was quite charming, and which belonged exclusively to himself. I was very intimate with Madame de Louvois, who introduced me to her sister, Madame de Custines.

The conduct of Madame de Logny, widow of one of the richest financiers, had been marked by something even worse than levity; and the scandal which ensued, appeared to have been a lesson to her two

daughters, who both became two perfectly virtuous and irreproachable women; the eldest, who married M. de Louvois, was the smallest woman I ever saw; but she had a beautiful shape, delicate little hands, a fine complexion, a pretty face, and an infantine air, which rendered this little person quite charming.

M. and Madame de Louvois lived with Madame de Logny; this was even made one of the conditions of the marriage, as Madame de Logny would not consent to be separated from her beloved daughter, whom she loved far more than the other, who afterwards married M. de Custines. M. de Louvois conducted himself with somewhat of levity towards his mother-in-law; Madame de Logny was offended, and displeased with her daughter, because she did not partake her resentment. Madame de Louvois adored her husband; but this tenderness was so unworthily returned, that it may almost be regarded as a weakness on her part; but it was the duty of a mother to respect it, and Madame de Logny did not. In her malice against her son-in-law, she showed so little sense and principle, as to acquaint her daughter with the infidelities and the licentious conduct of her husband. By this unworthy behaviour, she entirely lost the confidence of Madame de Louvois, whom she thus afflicted with a misfortune which she could not remedy. The reciprocal dislike augmented; annoyances of all kinds, and treacherous explanations

multiplied daily. At length, one day, when Madame de Logny was gone to dine in the country, M. de Louvois, who had secretly hired a house, quitted that of his mother-in-law, without giving her any notice of it; he removed all his furniture in a few hours, and carrying his wife along with him. This rude and extraordinary behaviour carried the rage and resentment of Madame de Logny to its height. In vain did Madame de Louvois write the most submissive letters to her mother, or waited upon her at her house; her letters were sent back unopened, and her mother's door remained shut against her. Madame de Logny sent her word that she would never either pardon her, or see her face again; and unfortunately she kept her threat. She resisted, with an extravagant and barbarous firmness, all the representations of her friends, and the tears and supplications of Mademoiselle de Logny, who interceded with ardour and peseverance for her unfortunate sister. But Madame de Logny became the victim of her own harshness, and suffered a change of health, which soon became a very dangerous chronic disease. In proportion as her strength decreased, her resentment seemed to augment, or rather, her unnatural hate appeared to be destroying in her the principles of life. Can an implacable mother exist? . . . When her end approached, those about her mentioned the name of Madame de Louvois; she desired

them to be silent. They endeavoured, but fruitlessly to awaken in her breast some sentiments of religion. The curate of the parish came without being sent for; he spoke to her of the sacraments, but she replied not a word. At last he pronounced the name of Madame de Louvois, and Madame de Logny said, in a terrible voice, "Leave my house, Sir!" He withdrew, and remained in a closet adjoining the bed-room. Mademoiselle de Logny had brought her sister secretly into the house, and had her concealed from her mother's view. At what she thought a favourable moment, she threw herself on her knees at her mother's bedside, and, bathed in tears, she implored her sister's pardon. "Hold your tongue!" was the only reply she obtained. Madame de Louvois passed four days and four nights on a rush-bottomed chair, in her cruel mother's anti-chamber. Madame de Logny admitted no one into her room but Périgny and her youngest daughter. The latter collected from several words that dropped from her mother that she meditated a vengeance which would survive her. The fifth day, Madame de Logny, who was at her last extremity, though still perfectly sensible, sent for her notary, and was shut up with him more than two hours; during this time, Mademoiselle de Logny requested a private interview with Périgny, and addressed him thus: "You, Sir, are the person whom I esteem the most in the world;

and I wish to open my heart to you. I have no knowledge of business; but I know there are means of eluding the laws, and that, by employing them, my mother can disinherit my sister, which I believe to be her design. My intentions are good; but I am only seventeen: at that age I may draw back, or follow bad advice; I therefore wish to bind myself to my resolution by an irrevocable vow. I beg you, Sir, whom I revere as a father, to receive the word of honour which I here solemnly pledge you, to give up to my sister, if she is disinherited, not merely a part of my mother's property, but the entire half, which is her right. Now (added she) I am easy upon this point; it is now impossible for me to fail in my duty." Périgny was deeply touched by this conduct, but what struck him the most in the behaviour of the young person, who had all her life been remarkable for decision of character, was the modest and virtuous distrust of herself, and the precaution which she thought it necessary to take, of binding herself so as to render herself incapable of changing her determination. This trait of character is, indeed, admirable, and proves the soul of an angel, and a virtue truly worthy of a Christian. On the evening of the same day, Mademoiselle de Logny and the president made a last effort in favour of Madame de Louvois; they ventured to declare that she had been in the anti-chamber for the last five days; upon this Madame de

Logny, raising her voice, pronounced in fury these terrible words: "I curse her!" Her unhappy daughter, placed against the half open door of the room, heard them, and fainted. After this last effort of unnatural hatred, Madame de Logny fell into a long and terrible agony, and died at the break of day. If she had had any sense of religion, and had received the sacraments, she would have opened her arms to her daughter, and, in spite of her inconceivable hardness of heart, she would have pardoned her! . . . . On her death, Mademoiselle de Logny went into the convent of Pantemont.

By her will, Madame de Logny gave to the President de Périgny all her fortune (about one hundred thousand francs a-year), her lands, revenues, furniture, diamonds, in short, all she possessed. M. de Périgny accepted the trust, and, agreeably to the intention of the testatrix, he gave up the whole fortune to Mademoiselle de Logny, who divided it with her sister, so scrupulously, that in sharing the plate, she broke in two a silver-gilt spoon, which had not a fellow, in order to send one half of it to Madame de Louvois. The latter died without children two or three years afterwards, and her whole fortune returned to the pure and generous hands which bestowed it. Mademoiselle de Logny, a year after her mother's death, married the Count de Custines. No young person ever entered into life with a more enviable reputation,

or was received in a manner more distinguished, and more flattering. Her conduct towards her sister, of which Périgny had published all the details, excited the well-founded admiration of every one, and inspired me with the greatest anxiety to become acquainted with her. She was a very handsome woman, with a countenance imposing and somewhat severe; but her features were perfectly regular. She was tall; all her features were handsome, especially her eyes, which, for size, form and expression, were quite admirable. I threw myself on her neck with a naïveté which touched her extremely. From this time I date the friendship we conceived for each other, and which lasted till the death of this admirable woman. At her house, I met a young lady of our own age, who became my friend, and whose friendship I have had the good fortune to preserve. This was the Countess d'Harville; she had a pretty face, she was intelligent, mild, and lively: I never knew any one more sincere, or whose company was more agreeable. At my own house also I saw the Marchioness de Bréhant, a perfect beauty in miniature: she was extremely little. I sometimes visited the Marchioness of Roncé, an old friend of the late Princess of Condé; she had a party every Saturday, where there was conversation and music; I played on the harp there several times. At her house I met M. de Champfort, who had already

published his *Young Indian Girl:* he had a handsome face, and was a great coxcomb. At Madame de Boulainvilliers, I became acquainted with another poet, Lemierre, who was an excellent man; he read his own tragedies with ridiculous vehemence, but he had a great deal of talent and right feelings. He was surprisingly ugly, but his ugliness was not revolting; he had a high opinion of his own merit, and he showed it frankly and without any arrogance. It was rather an *opinion* than a pretension, and as he did not seem to be offensively vain of it, every one took it in good part. I supped from time to time with the Marchioness of Créné, with the young Duchess of Liancourt, and the Marchioness of Beuvron; we dined or supped once a week with Madame Puisieux, and once or twice a month with the Marchioness d'Etrée; but the persons whom I loved most to see were Madame de Balincour, Madame de Custines, and Madame d'Harville.

I was now *enceinte* of Madame de Valence, who was born, (as well as my first child) in the Cul-de-sac St. Dominique. After my accouchement, I experienced a real fright. As soon as the infant was examined, I remarked on the features of M. de Genlis and all the other persons who were in the room, an air of consternation, which led me to fancy that I had brought a deformed child into the world; at the same time I heard a mysterious whispering, which confirmed my

fears. I interrogated every one so anxiously, that they were at last obliged to answer me. M. de Genlis, with a visage of preparation which made me shudder, told me that my poor little girl was in fact born with a *deformity*; but he advised me to be tranquil, and that next day I should know all. I was by no means disposed to be tranquil; but burst into tears, crying, that I insisted on seeing my infant, to bless it and *love it all alone*, were it even a carp. M. de Genlis scolded me, for what he called *my unbridled imaginations*, and at last they brought me *the monster*, which turned out such a charming young woman, and showed me below her chin a strawberry in half relief, very red, and marked with little spots, like that fruit; of the same shape, and exactly resembling a beautiful garden-strawberry. On discovering that this was all, my joy was unbounded; I thought, and I said, that such a singular mark was even very pretty, and that I hoped it would not wear off; but M. de Genlis, vexed about this poor strawberry, tried all imaginable means of flattening and removing it, and at last succeeded in effacing the mark entirely.

As soon as I was recovered from my confinement, I went in the spring to the Isle-Adam, where the Prince of Conti resided. I had already *come out*, as the phrase is, but I had never been at the Isle-Adam, and for a young person this was a kind of first ap-

pearance. The Countess de Boufflers, and the Maréchale de Luxembourg, both remarkable for the excellent taste of their style and manners, and intimate friends of the Prince of Conti, passed all the fine part of the year at the Isle-Adam; and there, as well as at Paris, they reigned the supreme judges of all who appeared in the great world. I had never visited these ladies; I had only met them in company, and was merely known to them by sight. Up to this time, I had spoken but little in company; I reserved all my conversation for my intimate friends; my face and my harp alone were the themes of eulogy; for my reserve and timidity led people to judge unfavourably of my understanding. When my aunt was interrogated on the subject, she used merely to reply, that I was a good creature, and as *naïve* as Madame de D * * * *. This was a person thirty-five years old, and famous for retaining at that age all the childishness of manner which she had at fifteen; which was very properly considered as the rarest example of folly ever exhibited in fashionable life. It was my aunt who took me to the Isle-Adam. The very first day, Mesdames de Luxembourg and de Boufflers made her some questions about my talents. My aunt made her usual answer. "That is singular," said the Maréchale, "for she is an exception to the proverb, which says, that round faces have no character in them; there is a great deal of quick mean-

ing in hers." The Maréchale de Luxembourg had made amends for all the errors of her youth, by her sincere devotion, and by the excellent education she had bestowed upon her grand-daughter, the Duchess de Lauzun, a young person of eighteen, of a truly angelic disposition. The Maréchale had read little, but she had a fine natural understanding, remarkable for quickness, delicacy, and grace. She attached too much importance to elegance of language, of manners, and to the knowledge of the habits of high life. She decided irrevocably upon an expression which was in bad taste; and, strange to say, this frivolous manner of judging almost always turned out to be just. But she applied this test only to persons who lived much in the society of the capital, and not to people from the country, or to foreigners. "A person," said she, "who has opportunities of seeing what is elegant, and what is not, and who adopts any mode contrary to the tone of good society, must be destitute of taste, tact, and delicacy." She affected to have discovered in the usages of high life, as they then existed, an admirable mixture of cleverness and good sense; and indeed, when any one questioned her on that subject, she had always a ready reply, which was equally ingenious and witty. Her disapprobation, never expressed otherwise than by a laconic kind of mockery, was a sentence from which there was no appeal. Any one on whom it

was inflicted, lost generally that sort of personal respect, which caused his company to be thought desirable in society, or which procured him an invitation to the charming *petits soupers*, where only persons remarkable for their agreeable talents, and their fashion, were admitted. This sort of consideration was, at that time, very desirable, and much sought after.

The Maréchale's censures were not always levelled at frivolous things only; she condemned, with equal rigour, any thing insolent or dogmatic in the tone, all presumptuous confidence, and every thing which discovered in conversation either coxcombry or ill-feeling. The Maréchale was truly the instructress of all the youth of the court; and persons belonging to the court, in turn, placed a high value on rendering themselves agreeable to her. I made a study of all she said; she showed an attachment to me, and allowed me to interrogate her about things of which I was ignorant, and especially on the habits of high life, of which she had studied the *spirit;* this assisted me much in the composition of a work which I have now in my portfolio, entitled, *The Spirit of the Usages and Etiquettes of the Eighteenth Century.* I intend to give it another form, and to publish it as a dictionary.*

* This has been done since writing the above.—(*Note by the Author.*)

The Comtesse de Boufflers,* an old and intimate friend of the Prince of Conti, and who had preserved a prodigious influence over him, was one of the most amiable persons I have ever known; she had a love of paradoxes, which disposed her perpetually to maintain the most singular and extravagant opinions; she was, perhaps, too great an enemy of common-places. This aversion to ordinary themes, which was joined in her to a great deal of wit, rendered her conversation extremely piquant, but gave her the reputation, very erroneously, of judging ill; her talk was highly amusing and agreeable. She loved to show others off to the best advantage, and she did this in a natural and graceful manner, which was altogether peculiar to herself. The Countess Amelia, her daughter-in-law, to whom she was passionately attached, then seventeen years old, had nothing remarkable about her. Her mother-in-law repeated *bons mots*, which she attributed to her, but which she alone had heard; however, since the death of Madame de Boufflers, no one else has cited any.

There resided constantly at the Isle-Adam, a very amiable old man, M. du Pont-de-Vesle. Every evening after supper, the Prince of Conti requested him to sing *impromptus* upon all the young ladies

* This is not the Marchioness de Boufflers, mother of the celebrated Chevalier de Boufflers.—(*Note by the Editor.*)

who were at table. He sung these couplets in blank verse. There was, in these couplets, gallantry without insipidity, and infinite grace; but this practice was embarrassing for the ladies; it was difficult to preserve an easy air during these public eulogies, though they had in them a little touch of the epigrammatic.

M. de Conti was the only one among the princes of the blood, who had a taste for literature and the sciences, or who could speak in public. His face, person, and manners, were imposing; no man could say obliging things with more delicacy and grace; and in spite of his successes among the women, there was not, in his manner, the slightest trace of coxcombry. He was, moreover, the most magnificent of our princes; at his house, you felt as if you were in your own. At the Isle-Adam, each lady had a carriage and horses at her command; and not being obliged to go down into the saloon, till an hour before supper, she was at liberty to ask parties to dinner daily in her own apartments. As the Prince did not dine, he wished to save the ladies the trouble of going down into the dining-room, and the annoyance of sitting at table, where a hundred other persons dined. Ceremony was reserved for the evening; but during the day you enjoyed perfect liberty, and all the charms of private society. What a pity, that so

amiable a prince should have had the singular passion of affecting sometimes an air of despotism and harshness, which, by no means, belonged to his disposition! I shall here mention an instance, of which I was witness one day, as we quitted our room to go into a neighbouring one, to hear mass celebrated. M. de Chabriant stopped the Prince of Conti, to request his orders relative to a poacher, who had just been apprehended. At this question, the Prince of Conti, raising his voice very high, replied coldly, "A hundred blows, and three months imprisonment;" and then pursued his way with the most tranquil air possible. Such coldness, joined to such cruelty, made me shudder. In the afternoon, meeting with M. de Chabriant, I could not refrain from mentioning the poor poacher, and the barbarous sentence pronounced by the Prince. "Oh!" said M. de Chabriant, laughing, "this was only addressed to the audience. I know him well; none of his tyrannical orders, given in public, are ever executed; as for the poacher, for whom you are so much interested, he will merely be banished from the Isle-Adam for two months; and, during that time, Monseigneur will secretly take care of his family, which is very numerous. Such were the orders he gave me on leaving mass." "What!" rejoined I; "is it not then a first emotion of anger, which makes him pro-

nounce such odious sentences?"—"No," he replied, "it is merely done for *effect*; he wishes, from time to time, to appear formidable and terrible."

The Prince of Conti has been too much praised for what was then called his *firmness*. Such an eulogy must have been highly flattering to a prince of the house of Bourbon; it is the only praise (since the time of the regency) which flattery could not venture on; and, in order to merit it, the Prince of Conti affected the tyrant, while his heart overflowed with sentiments of humanity.*

The Prince of Conti had an imposing exterior, a handsome and majestic expression of face, and a great deal of talent; but I could never accustom myself to his manner, nor get rid of the embarrassment with

* The old Countess of Rochambeau once related to me a beautiful trait of the Prince of Conti's gallantry and magnificence. Madame de Blot, then very young, one day said in his presence, that she wished to have the portrait of her canary in a ring. The Prince offered to give her the portrait and the ring, which Madame de Blot accepted, on condition that the ring should be mounted in the simplest manner, and not set with stones. The ring was, in fact, only a plain hoop of gold, but, instead of a glass to cover the portrait, a large diamond had been used, which was ground as thin as glass. Madame de Blot discovered this piece of prodigality, and returned the diamond; upon which the Prince of Conti caused the diamond to be ground into powder, and used it to dry the ink of the letter he wrote on the subject to Madame de Blot.—(*Note by the Author.*)

which his presence affected me; he had something scrutinizing in his air, which disconcerted me. Notwithstanding that he had been prejudiced in my favour by Mesdames de Luxembourg and de Boufflers, he thought me but a very middling person; and when M. de Donézan told him that I acted proverbs in an extraordinary style, he refused to believe it. It was afterwards determined that we should act proverbs. A little portable stage was erected in the dining-room, and we played the *Cobbler and the Financier;* there were but three persons, the financier, the cobbler, and his wife. I played the latter, and M. Donézan the cobbler, in a style of perfection which was quite inimitable. My aunt had never seen me act proverbs, for I had only played once with M. Donézan at Madame de La Reynière's, and in the presence of not more than four or five persons. We were prodigiously applauded; the silent timidity which I had hitherto manifested, gave my success the air of a miracle; in the last scene, I excited both the tears and the laughter of my auditory: the Prince's surprise was extreme. He made M. de Genlis promise to have my portrait painted in my costume of the cobbler's wife holding up my apron full of onions. I was so painted; but I do not know what afterwards became of the picture. We were made to perform this little piece four days successively. The Maréchale and Madame de Boufflers were delighted upon this

occasion; they seemed to triumph in my success, and repeated continually, that, in order to play so well, from my own ideas of the part, I must have prodigious ingenuity and talent; what the part principally wants is a feeling of nature. The Prince of Conti tried anew to converse with me, but in vain; my embarrassment in his company was invincible. All the women, and particularly my aunt, insisted also upon acting proverbs, and asked M. Donézan to give them lessons; but he assured them that he had never given me any, and that I had played the part from the first as I represented it in public.

Several proverbs were rehearsed. Madame de Montesson and Madame de Sabran (lady of honour to the Princess of Conti) chose parts in them, and played not even tolerably, but in the most absurd and ridiculous manner. They felt this, and their vexation was extreme. Madame de Sabran showed her's like an infant; after the play, she cried with vexation. This scene surprised and confounded me. Madame de Sabran, who had hitherto shown me much goodwill, from this time became my enemy: I have had many since from as frivolous a cause. The proverbs were stopped, to the great regret of the Prince of Conti, the Maréchal, Madame de Boufflers, and Monsieur de Donézan. We acted comedies, in which I had only two insignificant parts—that of a lover in the *Impromptu de Campagne*, and Isabella in the *Plaideurs*.

But in order to hear me sing and play the harp, M. du Pont-de-Vesle wrote a little piece called the *Nuptials of Isabella,* in which I played a sonata for the harp, and sung several pretty verses.

Madame de Montesson, in my opinion, played very ill in comedy, because in that, as in every thing else, she wanted natural feeling. But she had a great deal of dexterity, and the sort of talent which a country actress possesses, who has succeeded, from her age, to play the principal parts, though she plays them only by rote. The Count, afterwards Duke of Guignes, was of this party ; he passed for being one of the most brilliant and agreeable persons about the court ; there was nothing remarkable about his person, but an extraordinary affectation of nicety about his hair, and magnificence in his dress. All his reputation for wit was founded on a sort of *espionnage,* which he exercised over all little matters, that were either ridiculous or in bad taste ; these he characterized in a few words, and in a very pleasant manner *denounced* them to Madame de Luxembourg, and sneered at them in a very piquant way with her and Madame de Boufflers. But this kind of mockery never fell upon reputations, but only upon trifling follies. The Duke of Guignes had some agreeable accomplishments ; he was a good musician, and played well upon the flute. Another gentleman of this period, who was a great favourite among the women, was the Count de Chabot ; he

was neither handsome nor very young; he never spoke loud, but he stammered—a defect which in him seemed a grace; he practised a kind of mysterious gallantry, only expressed by a few piquant words, always whispered in an under-tone; it was, however, somewhat common, being addressed to almost all the young ladies; but it did not appear so, because it was always *confided* as it were in a whisper to the ear, and with an air of feeling and truth which had something very seducing in it. His brother, the Count de Jarnac, was the most polished gentleman of the court; he had a passion for the fine arts, and was very magnificent; his manners were noble, and his face rather handsome, but he wanted grace. I met again at the Isle-Adam, with great pleasure, the Countess de Coigny, formerly Mademoiselle de Roissy, with whom I had been very intimate at the convent of the Précieux Sang. She was somewhat singular in her manners, but she had much talent and good feeling; we renewed our acquaintance, and she told me that she was fond of studying anatomy—a strange taste for a young female of eighteen. As I had a little studied medicine and surgery, Madame de Coigny loved to converse with me.* I promised to go through a

* The Countess of Coigny died very young; and it was said that her taste for anatomy contributed to her death, by causing her to respire an impure air. It has also been asserted that she

course of anatomy, but not like her, on dead human bodies. The celebrated Mademoiselle de Biron,* who lived at the Estrepade, near the Cul-de-Sac Saint Dominique, was the first who invented entire anatomical subjects, made up of wax and rags; she executed them with astonishing perfection; and it was at her house that I began, and continued at different times a course of anatomy. She modelled her imitations upon corpses which she kept in a glass-cabinet in the middle of the garden: I never ventured to enter this cabinet, which was her favourite spot, and which she called *her little boudoir*.

The younger Countess of Egmont, daughter of the Marshal de Richelieu, at whose house I had supped several times with Madame de Montesson, came this year to the Isle-Adam; she had still a charming face, notwithstanding her ill health; she was then but twenty-eight or twenty-nine, and had the prettiest features I have ever seen. She gave herself far too many airs of face; but all her airs were graceful. Her understanding was like her face, full of mannerism,

never travelled without having a dead body in the boot of the carriage.—(*Note by the Author.*)

* This lady, whose name was Biheron, was the daughter of a surgeon, and had followed several courses of anatomy. Her subjects were so well executed, that Sir W. Pringle, on seeing them said, "They want nothing but the smell."—(*Note by the Editor.*)

but elegant withal. I am of opinion that Madame d'Egmont was only singular and not affected; her manner was natural to her. She had formed many violent attachments, and she has been reproached with a romantic passion, which continued long; but her conduct has always been pure. The women did not love her; they envied the seducing charms of her face, and rendered no justice to her goodness and mildness of disposition; and as she was open to reprehension in many respects, she was not spared in any thing in which she could be blamed. I have never seen any one made the subject of so many little mockeries as she was; but this neither prevented me from seeking her acquaintance, nor from loving her society, nor from thinking her charming. The last time my aunt and I supped with her, before going to the Isle-Adam, M. de Lusignan, who was called *Thick-head,* was present. M. de Lusignan was not quite destitute of understanding, but he never reflected a moment, and had a habit of openly saying whatever was uppermost in his imagination. As he was not malignant, this characteristic was overlooked in favour of the air of originality it gave him. At the supper I allude to, when we were seated at table in the dining-room, his eyes fixed upon a large picture opposite him, which represented a very beautiful woman in a sitting posture, with the air of one occupied with melancholy thoughts. He interrogated M. d'Egmont

as to the subject of the picture; and M. d'Egmont replied, that the melancholy figure was that of one of his ancestors, the wife of a Count of Egmont, who, having discovered her infidelity to him, *cut off her head*. "My God! Madam," cried M. de Lusignan, addressing himself to Madame d'Egmont, "does not such an example frighten you? . . . . but (added he) thank heaven the Egmonts of the present day are not so ferocious." During these interesting remarks, all the company looked at each other, Madame d'Egmont pretended to laugh, and the subject was speedily changed. My aunt related this scene to several persons, through whom it reached the ears of Madame d'Egmont, who was told that it was I who had told the story. When Madame d'Egmont came to the Isle-Adam, I was extremely surprised to find her very cold in her manner with me; I was told that she said, that notwitstanding my mild and timid air, I was very malicious; I begged my aunt to ask her why she had taken up this opinion of me after having shown me so much friendship. My aunt called upon her one morning, and Madame d'Egmont told her what had been reported to her; upon this, my aunt did what was highly honourable to her—she confessed herself to be the person to blame. I cannot doubt of this handsome conduct on the part of my aunt, for from this time Madame d'Egmont was particularly attentive to me on all occasions, and I remarked

that she was very cold with Madame de Montesson —to whom she has ever since borne a dislike.

We remained six weeks at the Isle-Adam; afterwards I passed a few days at Paris, and then I went with my aunt to Villers-Coterets, for the first time. We had studied parts, in order to act plays there, and even to perform operas. We played *Vertumnus and Pomona.* I performed Vertumnus, who takes the shape of a woman, and my aunt played Pomona; she dressed for the part in a gown decorated with apples and other fruits; Madame d'Egmont said she looked like a walking green-house. The dress was heavy and my aunt was short, and her shape far from handsome; her voice, too, was far too weak for taking a part in an opera; she failed completely in this one. The Marquis of Clermont, afterwards ambassador to Naples, played the god Pan very well. My success in Vertumnus was unbounded. We had all the opera dancers in our ballets, the piece was to have been represented three times, but was played only once; as well as the *Isle Sonnante,* a comic opera, of which the words were by Collé, and the music by Monsigny. I played a sultana, and the scene opened with a grand air, which I sung, accompanying myself on the harp. Monsigny wrote the part and the air on purpose for me. I wore a splendid dress, dazzling with gold and jewels; when the curtain drew up, I had three rounds of applause, and my air had a double *encore.* It was

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impossible for me not to perceive after the performance, that my aunt was in very ill humour. We acted *Rose and Colas*; my aunt, who was thirty, performed Rose, and I the part of the old mother Robi. We played besides, the *Deserter*, in which Madame de Montesson had the best part; I played that of the young girl; the Countess de Blot, who had been maid of honour to the late Duchess of Orleans, and who was then thirty-four, played the principal parts in the *Misanthrope* and the *Legacy*, and with the greatest success. She really had infinite grace, and the talent of playing very cleverly. The Count de Pont performed the part of the Misanthrope to perfection, without imitating any actor of the Theâtre Français; he had a real talent for acting, and an air of nobility in his manners and behaviour, which no actor by profession can have. M. de Vandreuil was also one of the good actors of our troop; he had an agreeable face, and was a perfect imitator of Molé in the parts of lovers. M. de Vandreuil was much in fashion; his talents were not very considerable, but his manners were of the highest elegance. Madame d'Hénin said, that the only two persons who could *talk to women*, were Le Kain on the stage, and M. de Vandreuil in a saloon. The latter had a number of pretty little talents, middling enough, but agreeable in company. He sung a little, danced tolerably, and appeared to love all the fine arts; even if this was no

more than pretence, it is useful to the arts and creditable to the amateur. He was gentle and polite in his manners; no one dreaded his malignity; all loved his society.

The celebrated comic actor, Grandval, superintended our repetition of our parts, and even acted with us. The Duke of Orleans played very *broadly* the part of a peasant. I met at our rehearsals Collé and Sedaine, neither of whom were amiable persons. Carmontel, the reader of the Duke of Orleans, entered the room always after dinner, with a large book, in which he put the portraits of all the persons who arrived at Villers-Coterets; all these portraits were in profile, and somewhat caricatured; but they were like the originals, and formed a curious collection. He gave us only one sitting; I was represented as very ugly, and in the attitude of playing on the harp; I had a small forehead, which he drew a great deal too large, and thus took away all resemblance. The Duke of Orleans wished to see me act proverbs with Carmontel, who played to perfection the part of a brutal or ill-tempered husband; these he played with inimitable nature and spirit, but he could play nothing else. M. de Donézan and M. d'Albaret acted with us; my aunt refused to play, but we excited such an euthusiasm, that we agreed to act every evening. My aunt, towards the end of our stay here, met with a signal and brilliant success. This history

is sufficiently singular to deserve a full narration of all the particulars.

From the time of my marriage, my aunt had shown great friendship for me; and I, in my turn, had become so much attached to her, that I no longer preserved any of my old recollections of her conduct, or the dislike I had once felt for her. I ascribed her harshness towards my mother, partly to her levity of character, and partly to the avarice which I could not fail to discover, and which was, in fact, her ruling passion; indeed, I saw no other fault in her; she had a very equal temper, and some gaiety; I thought her candid and feeling, and she seemed extremely fond of me. I was convinced that she had the utmost confidence in me, and I was profoundly attached to her; she told me, that the Duke of Orleans was in love with her, and that he was jealous of the Count de Guines. Madame de Montesson had not pretended to disavow this mutual attachment, but she protested it had always been platonic, and that the sentiments she felt could only be altered by the change of those of the Count de Guines. She told me all these matters, as well as the Duke of Orleans, and I believed them as he did. I forgot to say, that before we left the Isle-Adam, the Duke of Orleans had come to pass seven or eight days there; during this time, the Count de Guines seemed to be entirely occupied with the Countess Amélie de Bouf-

flers; my aunt pointed this out to me, adding, that she was dying of grief at the sight. I suggested to her mildly, that she should do all in her power to triumph over a passion, which was always blameable, notwithstanding the purity of her behaviour, especially as she was married as well as the Count. M. de Montesson was eighty, but the Countess de Guines was young. My aunt talked exceedingly well about virtue; I even thought I discovered in her some sentiments of religion; she lamented her weakness, and I pitied her sincerely, supposing her to be in a state of mind the most distressing possible. As for the Duke of Orleans, she told me she felt for him only a tender friendship, and that she did all in her power to cure him of an unhappy passion. I confess I did not believe this, for the contrary was quite evident; but I ascribed her conduct with the Duke to her natural coquetry, and I never suspected her of any ambitious design. Monsigny, one of the best men I have ever known, and who had a great deal of natural talent, became quite transported with my voice and my harp, and came every day to have some music with me in my room. I acquired a friendship for him; we talked while we played; he related to me a great many curious things, and, among others, one that surprised me. It was, that my aunt had privately requested him, as well as Sedaine, to give her acting *eulogies only* at the rehearsals, (at which the

Duke of Orleans was always present,) and to reserve his advice and instructions for her private ear; she said that this would encourage her. Monsigny and Sedaine judged that this was a contrivance to exalt her in the eyes of the Duke of Orleans; and, in this respect, they seconded her admirably, for they were truly prodigal of their eulogies. This contrivance succeeded perfectly; the Duke of Orleans was convinced that her talents were miraculous. This very weak prince, who was by no means endowed with the decision and talent of Henry the Great, never judged for himself; he saw every thing with the eyes of others. All the old female friends of the Duke of Orleans, without being at all fond of Madame de Montesson, entered perfectly into her views, for each had a private interest in doing so. The constancy of the Duke of Orleans, for several years, to a courtesan, called *Marquise*, (afterwards styled Madame de Villemonble,) had completely withdrawn the prince from the enjoyment of the best female society; Mesdames de Ségur, (the mother and daughter-in-law,) Mesdames de Beauvau, de Grammont, de Luxembourg, thus lost all the pleasure which the intimate society of princes always affords. For a long time, these ladies never went to Villers-Coterets; there Marquise reigned; and the Duke of Orleans never invited any but men. We owed the brilliant party, which was then at Villers-Coterets, to Madame

de Montesson; for this reason, all the ladies wished that my aunt should succeed in inspiring the prince with a vivid passion; it was far more desirable for them that the mistress of the prince should be a person of rank than a courtesan, for, in the former case, they could again enjoy his society. I do not know whether they were penetrating enough to discover that my aunt, instead of consenting to be the prince's mistress, aspired to be his wife. But, even in this case, the latter event could not be disagreeable to them; on the contrary, all the women of quality must have been flattered by it, as it gave them hopes of an alliance to royalty.

My aunt, who, as I have already mentioned, wished to finish her residence here with something brilliant, bethought herself of a singular idea. She saw that the Duke of Orleans had a high admiration of her accomplishments, but he could not have the same opinion of her talents; she wished suddenly to acquire a reputation for the latter, which should eclipse that of Mesdames de Boufflers, de Beauvau, and de Grammont. But how was this to be accomplished? My aunt was extremely ignorant, and during her whole life had read nothing whatever, except a few romances. She spelt very badly, and wrote letters very ill. Yet she took it into her head to become an author; and being incapable of invention herself, she resolved to dramatize Marivaux's

novel of *Mariane;* the numerous dialogues in that work furnished her with a great many scenes ready made; and, besides, the subject pleased her,—"Love triumphing over the prejudices of high birth, and placing both ranks on a level." But my aunt was not unaware, that, by producing the work under her own name, she would have to combat pretensions, of which no interest can persuade the abandonment; and that the women who had so long passed, by general consent, for the most ingenious and brilliant persons in society, would not easily give up their places to her. My aunt extricated herself from this difficulty in the most ingenious manner I have ever known. She wrote the piece in prose, and in five acts; it was a performance below mediocrity, without being very absurd, in which there were some pretty phrases, and several agreeable conversation-scenes, literally copied from Marivaux's novel. She told no one of this work, but the Duke of Orleans; she concealed it from me as well as from every body else. When the piece was finished, she read it *tête-à-tête* with the Duke of Orleans, and though he was no great judge of the matter, assured her that he thought it charming. "Well," said my aunt, "I give it to you; I shall enjoy your success more than my own; and, besides, I don't wish that any one should know that I am the author of the piece. Read the comedy as if it were your own, and if it succeeds, do not de-

clare me the author; let it be always thought to be written by you, and we will perform it at our last representation." The Duke of Orleans was moved, even to tears, by this *generosity*, but would not profit by it, until, at her earnest entreaties, he consented. I learnt, in the sequel, all this detail from himself. The Duke of Orleans avowed, then, that he had written a comedy, which avowal produced no small degree of surprise, in which Madame de Montesson appeared to join, persuading all the world, that she was ignorant of it, and expressing, with great *naïveté*, much anxiety respecting the work. Every one asked, in secret, how the Duke had been able to write a comedy, and it was generally thought that Collé, perhaps, had formed the plot of it, and corrected the language. Nobody, however, exhibited any suspicion as to the real author. The Duke of Orleans announced that he would have the play read; the day was named, and every one, both male and female, invited, who passed in society for persons of wit—the curiosity was extreme. At length the wished-for day arrived. I was admitted to the reading, but not without some difficulty, my aunt not caring that I should be there. We were then assembled, quite determined, beforehand, to find the work excellent, unless it should be quite detestable and ridiculous. The success was complete. Never was the reading of one of Moliere's plays productive of equal *éclat*—all were in ecstacies.

Every scene was greeted with plaudits the most exaggerated, and nothing heard but acclamations. In the midst of this enthusiasm, I kept a modest silence, but I *observed*, and assuredly nothing could be more curious. When the reading was finished, all the company hastened to surround the Duke; several ladies, quite beside themselves, asked permission to embrace him; all spoke at once; nothing could be heard, at least, nothing distinguished, except these phrases, a thousand times repeated, "ravishing—sublime—perfect!" My aunt, pale and red by turns, and weeping, expressed herself in no other way than by her emotion and tears. Suddenly, the Duke of Orleans demanded, in a tone the most expressive, a moment's silence. All were immediately quiet; when, with a voice agitated, but very resolute, he uttered these words: "In spite of my promise, I can no longer usurp so much glory!—This fine work is *not* mine; its author is Madame de Montesson." Upon this, my aunt cried, with a languishing voice, "Ah, Monseigneur!" She could say no more; her *modesty* overwhelmed her, and she sank, almost fainting, into a chair. All the assembly was petrified; it is impossible to give an idea of the effect of this *coup de théâtre*, and of the change which became visible in almost every face. The vexation of many ladies was very perceptible; but the evil was without remedy; there was no retract-

ing these commendations, bestowed with so much exaggeration; they could not but persevere in their extravagant flattery, and continued to assert, that the comedy of *Mariane* was a *chef-d'œuvre.* This triumph sufficed to complete the enthusiasm of the Duke of Orleans for my aunt, whom, from this time, he regarded as a prodigy of talent. I was deeply hurt that my aunt had kept this secret from me, and with so much duplicity; this distrust convinced me, to what extent I might calculate on her friendship. I did not show her all the chagrin I felt on the subject; I made some complaint, indeed, and she gave me, in explanation, several very insufficient reasons, with which, however, I pretended to be contented. We acted *Mariane,* my aunt enacting the part of the heroine; the representation had, by no means, the success of the reading, and was, therefore, not repeated.

It was on this excursion that I was present, for the first time, at a stag-hunt on horseback. At Genlis I had only hunted the boar; hunting the deer appeared to me delightful, especially as every one admired the grace with which I rode. From Villers-Coterets, M. de Genlis and I went to Sillery, which I visited for the first time. Madame de Puisieux, who had always been cool to me, received me, nevertheless, politely, though with somewhat of dryness, which redoubled my natural timidity. She spoke to

me of the applauses I had received at Villers-Coterets, and at last requested me to let her hear my performance on the harp. This was six days after my arrival. I played and sung; and she appeared to be enchanted, as well as M. de Puisieux. "It must be allowed," said she, "that she is *seducing*." I do not know why this phrase should have offended me, but I replied, in the first impulse of my displeasure, with some degree of warmth, "However, madam, I have never *seduced*, nor desired to seduce any person whatever." She was exceedingly astonished at my reply, for till this time I had scarcely said any thing but *yes* and *no*. She looked at me steadily, but said nothing. In the evening, M. de Genlis reprimanded me for my reply, and the next day I trembled to meet Madame de Puisieux, with whom I happened, in the morning, to be thrown *tête-à-tête* in the saloon. Madame de Puisieux, reclining on the sofa as usual, was engaged with her knitting, and I with my embroidery; we were both silent for about ten minutes. At last Madame de Puisieux, taking off her spectacles, and turning towards me, said, "Madam, have you made a vow to be always thus with me?" "How, madam?" replied I, in a trembling voice. "Yes," she rejoined, "I am told you are gay and agreeable in general, and for the last eight days you preserve an obstinate silence; may I presume to ask you the reason?" At this pressing

question, I immediately resolved to reply frankly, because the tone in which it was asked had something lively and obliging in it. "Madam," said I, "it is from fear of displeasing you; you wear an air of severity which intimidates and distresses me." "You are quite wrong to be afraid of me," replied she, "I am exceedingly disposed to become attached to you; what do you wish me to do, to put you at your ease with me?" "What you are now doing," cried I, throwing my arms about her neck; tears of tenderness stopped my words; she was herself strongly affected; took me in her arms, held me there, and kissed me several times with the most touching sensibility. From this time, I vowed in my heart a lasting and tender attachment to her; and she deserved it, for the excellence of her heart and her principles, and the charm of her talents. We talked together with complete freedom, she said a thousand kind things to me, and I promised that I should, in future, behave to her as if I had known her from my infancy. An hour afterwards, M. de Puisieux returned from walking with M. de Genlis, and six or seven other persons. I begged Madame de Puisieux to say nothing of what had passed between us, as I had thought of a pretty manner of communicating it. A few minutes after the company was seated, I said with a careless air, that not having taken a walk that day, I wished to exercise my

limbs; I ran and made two or three leaps about the room, and then threw myself into Madame de Puisieux's chair, uttering, at the same time, a great quantity of nonsense; she burst into fits of laughter, and every one of the company seemed petrified with surprise. M. de Puisieux was enchanted, and told his wife, that he had always predicted that she would love me to excess. All this evening was a delightful one to me, and the days that succeeded it were the happiest of my life. Madame de Puisieux became exceedingly attached to me. She made me change my room in order to be near her. I rode out on horseback every morning with M. de Puisieux, on some of his fine English horses. In the evening, instead of walking, I remained *tête-à-tête* with Madame de Puisieux, who sauntered with me up and down the court of the garden for half an hour; we passed the rest of the time in conversation in the drawing-room. Her conversation was animated, sparkling, and charming. She had lived under a part of the regency, and her husband became, afterwards, minister for foreign affairs; she was the grand-daughter of the great Louvois, and had her memory full of a number of interesting and curious anecdotes, which she told admirably. Before supper my harp was brought into the saloon, and I played upon it for an hour; after supper I played on the guitar or the harpsichord for half an hour; then I played

at piquet with Madame de Puisieux, against her husband, who held cards against us both, and then I retired to bed. I did not in general remain in my room, except from half past ten till two, on my return from my ride with M. de Puisieux. While my hair was dressing, I read; a habit which I have always preserved in all places where I have resided. At this time it was the custom, both at Paris and in the country, to receive gentlemen's visits at the toilette: but this I never did, in order to reserve that time for reading; so that, since my marriage, I have never spent a single day without passing a good part of it in reading. After dressing, I played on the harp for an hour, and wrote for three quarters of an hour. I was then engaged in re-writing my first comedy, *False Delicacy*, and I finished it on this excursion. Besides this, I made extracts from the books I read. Madame de Puisieux, in our evening meetings, often used to make me read aloud, while she worked at her tapestry; we had an excellent library at Sillery. Here I also read the *Treaty of Westphalia*, by Father Bougeant; *The Manner of judging of Works of Talent*, by Father Bouhours; and *The Dialogues of Aristus and Eugenius*, by the same author, which gave me me the taste for devices I have since always possessed. I read also the poems of Pavillon; *The History of Malta*, by the

Abbé de Vertot; and works of St. Evremond. On rainy days every body remained in the drawing-room; on these occasions I retired to my room, by which means I gained three or four additional hours of study.

Madame de Puisieux, knowing that I was constantly writing, begged me one day to write her portrait, of which I made two the same day, to the measure of a song, the one a pretended portrait, the other a real likeness. In the evening I sung the first, and then the second, accompanying them with my harp. These couplets received the applause with which her goodness always rewarded whatever I did for her. I subjoin the verses:

A PRETENDED PORTRAIT

OF MADAME DE PUISIEUX,

TO THE AIR, *Si ton ardeur est mutuelle.*

Point d'esprit, point de caractère,
Point d'agrément,
Ni gaîté, ni désir de plaire;
Un ton pédant,
Des préjugés, une humeur noire;
Ne sachant rien,
Pas même un simple trait d'histoire,
La voilà bien.

THE REAL PORTRAIT OF THE SAME.

To the same Air.

Du piquant dans le caractère
Et dans l'esprit
Un désir obligeant de plaire
Qui réussit;
Du savoir, mais sans y prétendre;
N'affichant rien,
Pas même un cœur sensible et tendre,
La voilà bien.

We went three or four times to Rheims, simply to pay a visit to Madame de Droménil. We also went two or three times to Louvois, to dine with the Marquis de Souvré, the brother of Madame de Puisieux. One day a person belonging to Rheims brought us a young musician, who played on the dulcimer in an astonishing style; Madame de Puisieux regretted that I could not play on that instrument. I remembered this remark; and that very evening I agreed in secret with the musician, that he should come every day, at half past six in the morning, to give me a lesson; these instructions I took regularly in the wardrobe, at the top of the house, for a fortnight; and, moreover, on returning from my rides in the morning, I used to play on the dulcimer alone for at least three hours; so that, in three weeks, I could play as well as my teacher two airs—the one, the

Exaudet minuet, and the other, the Furstemberg, with several variations. M. de Genlis, who was in the secret, had got made for me a pretty scarlet dress, in the Alsacian fashion, which fitted closely to the shape. I put on this one morning, and twisted my long hair round my head, without powder, as it was worn by the Strasburg women; above this head-dress, I put a bathing-cap to hide it, and over my dress I wore a morning-gown, and a mantle of black taffeta; in this double costume I went to dinner, pretending that I had a violent headach. After dinner a footman announced, that a young Alsacian girl, who played on the dulcimer, begged to be allowed to enter. Madame de Puisieux desired her to be admitted, and I rose up from table, saying, that I would go and bring her in. I ran into the next room, threw upon the table my cap and my gown, took my dulcimer, and returned quickly into the dining-room; the surprise of every body at table was extreme, and was still further augmented by hearing me play on the dulcimer. M. and Madame de Puisieux came and embraced me with a tenderness which amply rewarded me for all the pains I had taken in my study of the instrument. I was made to wear my Alsacian costume for twelve or fifteen days, in order to give every person who came to Sillery a representation of that little scene. It is not without reflection that I enter into all these little

details; they will, perhaps, be useful to the young women who may hereafter read this work. I wish them to understand, that youth is only happy when it is amiable; that is to say, when the young are docile, modest, and attentive to all; and that the principal duty of a young person is to be pleasing in the circle of her own family, and to diffuse among all its members, gaiety, amusement, and joy. When in the most brilliant part of their existence, we find instances among the young of the contrary, we may be sure they are always blameable. If we examine the characters and habits of young females who are insipid or tiresome, we shall generally find them indolent, lazy, and selfish, thinking only of themselves, and never of others. These girls, who are thus destitute of the graces of youth, are consequently without is mildness and its modesty; they are possessed with a puerile and passive vanity, that renders them disgusted with the counsels of experience, which they always regard as reprimands; they are cyphers in society, because no one can be either useful to them, nor experience, on their part, any of the agreeable attentions which one expects from good company. My sister-in-law had no talents, and her understanding was far from brilliant; nevertheless, as I have already stated, she was by no means insipid; she loved employment, and was never idle; she was obliging, and always took a part

in the gaiety and the amusements of others; and this is what may be expected from every young person —even those whose education has been the most neglected.

Madame de Puisieux really loved me to excess, and for that reason she did not spoil me. I was the only person whom she ever reprimanded, and this happened continually; for my vivacity, often degenerating into riotous gaiety, made me fail in many little points; on these occasions, Madame de Puisieux would reprimand me immediately, aloud, and in the presence of all the company. I have never had to make any effort on myself to enable me to receive these little lessons with humility; I felt the utility of them, and was grateful; they gave Madame de Puisieux, in my eyes, an air truly maternal, and rendered her still more dear to me; sometimes I used to beg her to leave me some little faults, because, if she succeeded in making me quite perfect, and she had nothing else to reprove me for, I feared I should feel less how I loved her, and how much I ought to esteem her.

The birth-day of M. de Puisieux approached, and I determined to celebrate it. I wrote a kind of piece, in which all M. de Puisieux's valets-de-chambre were to perform. I introduced into it M. de Puisieux himself, and the moment I chose was the time he was engaged in dressing. I performed the part of

M. de Puisieux. He was of short stature; I wore one of his dressing-gowns and his night-cap; I imitated all his peculiarities; I pretended to shave with a pasteboard razor, and during this operation, one of the valets read to me a little story of my own composition, as M. de Puisieux had the *Arabian Nights*, or other stories, read to him while he shaved. I rose up from time to time to pass into my closet; I went out through one door, threw into the side-scene my night-cap and dressing-gown, and came on the stage a moment after in my own character, in a morning-gown, with my hair in disorder, as if I had just risen from my toilette; I enquired for M. de Puisieux, and after a little scene, I went off again. I next resumed the dressing-gown and night-cap, and re-appeared as M. de Puisieux; many other unconnected scenes followed, and brought on the *denouement*, in which bouquets of flowers were presented to M. de Puisieux, and verses sung in his honour. I succeeded in making the four valets play extremely well, and very naturally; M. de Genlis had also a part, and we rehearsed the piece twice a-day. The Marquis and Marchioness de Genlis arrived ten days before the fête, and I added to the piece a short part for my sister-in-law. In order to show off her handsome face and figure, I brought her on the stage, first as an amazon, afterwards as a shepherdess, and lastly as a lady in full dress, wearing all her own diamonds and

those of Madame de Puisieux. The latter used always a work-bag, embroidered at Besançon, made of dyed horse-hair, and worked in relief; the bag was very pretty; but she had only one, and that was already faded, and she wished to order another to be made. I advised my sister-in-law to copy the old work-bag. At Rheims horse-hair was very well dyed; and she achieved this bag, which was quite a new sort of work for her, and exceedingly difficult, with astonishng perfection. She worked at it earnestly for a week; and in order to finish it, after several attempts, she passed three or four nights in this dutiful employment. We had a pretty little theatre erected in the large wing, which was called the royal apartments; and in which, by the way, during the time of the Chancellor de Sillery, Henry IV. had actually slept. The evening before the fête, I met with a fortunate adventure, from which I procured an admirable situation for my piece. The Duke of Civrac Durfort was the intimate friend of M. de Puisieux, who had obtained for him the embassy of Vienna. The duke, after passing eight years at Vienna, returned to France. All that M. de Puisieux knew from his last letter was, that he was then on his road, and that, before his return to Paris, he would pass by Sillery; but he was not expected for five or six days. He arrived, as I have stated, the day before the fête, at ten in the morning; M. de

Puisieux was two or three leagues off, on a visit to one of his neighbours; Madame de Puisieux was still in bed, and I had just got up. I ran instantly with M. de Genlis to receive M. de Civrac, who was just getting out of his coach; we talked to him as if we had been his oldest acquaintances, though we had never seen him before; however, we soou became acquainted; we explained our project to him with all possible speed, and it was agreed that he should remain concealed in M. de Genlis's room, which was over mine, and that he should not make his appear ance till the next day, when he was to present a bouquet to his old friend. We gave directions on the subject to all the house; all the servants were secret as the grave; we did not acquaint even Madame de Puisieux with our plan, and I can assert, that never secret was so well kept. The Duke of Civrac, who was about forty-seven, had a genteel face, elegant and agreeable manners, and a good humour, which gained all hearts. He told us that he was dying with hunger; and my sister-in-law and I undertook the care of his meals. We thought nothing could be better for him than plums, sweetmeats and orgeat, which we accordingly carried to him. He knelt upon one knee to receive this breakfast at our hands; at the same time confessing he was *vulgar* enough to feel the want of some meat and wine besides, with which taste of his we were obliged to comply. He acknowledged that

he had no memory, and begged, therefore, that his part might be very short. I promised that he should have only one sentence to repeat; and the following is the manner in which I determined to bring him on the scene.

My waiting-maid, Mademoiselle Victoire, had a pretty voice; she was, at most, thirty years of age, very stout and fresh coloured; I brought her into my piece as Madame Milot, portress of the residence of M. de Sillery at Paris. M. de Puisieux had from his earliest youth a passion for fine horses; and I learned from Madame de Puisieux, that he was so careful of them, that he had formerly given up a mistress for no other reason but that she lived in a part of the town very distant from his residence, and that the length of the road fatigued his horses. Upon this anecdote I composed a verse, which met with great success, notwithstanding the irregularity of one of the rhymes. In my piece Madame Milot was supposed to arrive at Paris in a female costume, but with large boots, a horse-whip in one hand, and a bouquet of flowers in the other. She was to advance to the front of the stage, and addressing M. de Puisieux, was to sing this verse:

J'accours, mais tout en nage,
Vous offrir ce bouquet,
Voilà de mon voyage
Le seul fâcheux effet;

Pour vous prouver mon zèle
J'ai pris le mords aux dents,
Jamais pour une belle
Vous n'en fîtes autant.

In addition to this scene, I represented M. de Civrac giving his arm to Madame Milot; the former had only three or four words to say, which he could never recollect at the rehearsals, but which he promised to repeat to himself often before going to bed. The next morning, the day of the fête, my sister-in-law placed on the work-frame of Madame de Puisieux, the pretty work-bag she had wrought, and I placed in the bag a song I had composed, which consisted chiefly of praises of the bag, and of the ingenuity of my sister-in-law. Madame de Puisieux was the best person in the world for receiving and acknowledging a mark of attention; she was delighted both with my sister-in-law and me. There was a large party at dinner, and nothing was talked of but her work-bag and my song.

The windows of the dining-room of Sillery, which is on the ground floor, look out upon large moats filled with water. On leaving table, the Marchioness of Genlis and I dressed ourselves as shepherdesses, and entered a boat prettily decorated with flowers, rowed by M. de Genlis, dressed as a shepherd; I had my bagpipe, on which no one of the château had yet heard me play; on hearing the sound of it at a distance, every body

went to the windows, and perceiving us, there was a general burst of acclamation, as we arrived under the windows, where we stopped. The Marchioness of Genlis had a net in her hand; I stopped playing, and M. de Genlis begged his sister-in-law to throw her net; upon this she turned her back a moment, and dropping the net into the water, she left it there and pulled out another full of bouquets and flowers. This little trick, which she performed very dexterously and prettily, was much applauded; and on the performance of this miracle, I sung to an accompaniment of my bagpipe, six charming verses written by M. de Genlis. We next took our bouquets out of the net, and arranging them in a basket, we announced our intention of carrying them into the dining-room; the company came to receive us on our disembarkation, and in half an hour afterwards all the party was invited to enter the room where the theatre was erected. My piece, in common with all pieces on such occasions, was prodigiously applauded; the only part which Madame de Genlis has ever played well, was that which I wrote for her in this piece; she looked beautiful as an angel; when she appeared in full dress, she was applauded for several minutes for her charming appearance; in general she dressed badly, but on this occasion I superintended her toilette, and I never saw her look so handsome. The *denouement* was very effective; on the appearance of M de

Civrac, M. and Madame de Puisieux uttered a cry of surprise and joy; M. de Civrac himself was so touched, that it was some time before he could utter a word; at last, still holding Madame Milot by the hand, he advanced to the front of the scene, but, instead of saying, as the part demanded, "that he had rode to Sillery behind Madame Milot," he cried, in a voice of thunder, "I am come on the back of Madame Milot." .... The shouts of laughter which resounded through the saloon, did not permit him to finish the phrase. He turned to me, saying, that he had made a *slip of the tongue*. I was in a great passion, and when the noise and laughter had a little subsided, I obliged him to repeat the phrase as I had written it. The fête was terminated by a round, which we all sung as we danced; the words, which were extremely pleasant and lively, were composed by M. de Genlis.

The next morning, as we rode out on horseback, M. de Puisieux desired me to tell M. de Genlis, that he gave up to him the place of governor of Epernay worth 7000 francs a year. This was a splendid and honourable present, totally unexpected by us; and it caused us both great pleasure. There was a large company from Paris on this excursion; among others was the Comte de Rochefort, a relation of M. de Puisieux and Messieurs de Genlis; he was fond of literature, and corresponded with M. de Voltaire, who

was very anxious to make partisans among persons belonging to the court. M. de Rochefort, who was extremely flattered at receiving letters from Voltaire, never failed, when there was no other company than the family, to read them to us. I discovered in these letters, flattery the most extravagant, and impiety the most revolting; M. and Madame de Puisieux were equally disgusted with them. What astonished us most, was the tone in which M. de Voltaire complimented M. de Rochefort upon his *philosophy* and his *philosophical* understanding; a phrase which meant his want of religion; now, M. de Rochefort had the deepest sense of religion; he protested to us (and he was sincerity itself) that he had made a resolution throughout this correspondence, never to touch on the subject of religion. But it has since been discovered, that this was one of M. de Voltaire's methods to drag people of rank into his sect. In this same excursion, I met with an adventure, which did great credit to my memory. M. de Rochefort was the friend of a very agreeable poet called M. Desbordes, who had sent him a manuscript fable of his, entitled *Daphne and the Butterfly*. There were in it one hundred and thirty lines, of eight syllables each; M. de Rochefort, after dinner, read it to us aloud; I thought it charming, and begged to be allowed to read it once more; I then returned it, saying, that I knew it by heart, which was perfectly true. I have

never since forgotten it; the poem has been printed in several collections.

I read a great deal at Sillery. M. de Puisieux had an excellent library, and I made a good use of it. I read aloud very well; the sound of my voice was pleasing, and in the afternoon, when the rest of the company was gone to walk, I read aloud, as I have already mentioned, to Madame de Puisieux; and my readings were almost always from books of history or plays. The reflections of Madame de Puisieux enhanced greatly to me the value and the interest of what I read. I brought away from Sillery a great quantity of extracts. I loved to enlarge my collection; nothing attached me more to my books than the enormous collection of notes, extracts and remarks I had collected, and which filled already a vast number of portfolios. Before leaving Sillery, I made Madame de Puisieux a little present, which delighted her. She had begged me to give her in writing a little list of all the airs I could play on the harp, the guitar, the harpsichord, &c., of which the number was prodigious. A copyist of Rheims wrote out for me the whole collection, in a pretty little volume, bound in morocco, to which I added all my sonatas, variations, rondos, &c. which I played on these instruments, giving a new name to each of the pieces of music; for example, my favourite sonata of *Alberti*, I styled *the Puisieux*; I gave that of which M. de Puisieux

was most fond, and which he asked me for the oftenest, the name of his favourite riding horse; and to all this I added a dedicatory epistle, addressed to Madame de Puisieux, which I here quote:

Quand on veut réussir et plaire,
Qu'on n'est sophiste ni méchant,
Qu'on veut instruire en amusant,
Qu'un livre est difficile à faire!
Vous, en qui l'on voit tant d'esprit,
Du mien daignez être l'arbitre,
Vous le trouverez *bien écrit*
Si vous en exceptez l'épître;
Qu'il ne soit connu que de vous,
A vous seule j'en fais hommage;
S'il mérite votre suffrage
Combien il fera de jaloux!
L'auteur saura braver les coups
De l'envie et de la satire,
Si, malgré tout leur vain courroux,
A son livre il vous voit sourire!

I presented this little volume to Madame de Puisieux the evening before we left Sillery; she received this trifling mark of affection with her usual expressions of pleasure, that is to say, with real transports of joy.

Madame de Puisieux, on quitting Sillery after Christmas, took me with her to Paris; we remained a fortnight at Braine, the residence of the dowager Countess of Egmont, mother-in-law of the young and

pretty countess, who was also resident there The Countess of Egmont had formerly been the *intimate friend* of M. le Duc, first minister of state during the youth of Louis XV. I collected from her conversations with Madame de Puisieux many curious anecdotes of this period, particularly relative to the beautiful Mademoiselle de Clermont, sister of the duke, and of whom Madame de Puisieux had been the friend. I met at this house the old Marquis of Croi, who, at the age of fifty appeared to be eighty; he had been a great favourite among the women, and could not overcome his regret at being no longer beloved by them. He still preserved all his coxcombical habits, and continued to dress in the most ridiculous style of elegance. This was the gentleman whom the old queen styled *the Invalid of Cythera*; but what a melancholy spectacle is that of an *invalid* without glory, whose infirmities recal nothing to our minds but the remembrance of disgraceful excesses! This premature old man was full of ill humour and whims; and being unable any longer to look amiable in the eyes of young women, he hated them. He affronted me; and I revenged myself in a manner which delighted Madame d'Egmont the younger. I affected to have for him the profound respect which one would have for a person of a hundred; he was enraged at this beyond measure, and his vexation produced the most comical scenes imaginable. At

last, he asked Madame d'Egmont, of what age I thought he was? she replied, that she amused herself with my simplicity, and allowed me to think him ninety years of age. This opinion did not tend to raise me in his favour; he declared that I was something worse than *simple;* and gave her to understand that he had never met in society with a young person so extremely stupid. Towards the end of my stay at Braine, I met a real old man, but who was exceedingly agreeable, the Marshal de Richelieu, father of the younger Madame d'Egmont. I looked upon him with great curiosity, as a person who had seen Louis XIV., and lived in habits of intimate friendship with Madame de Maintenon. The marshal was agreeable in his manners, and full of goodness and mildness: he had gained successes in the field, which honoured his old age, and he was no way humbled at the thought of having ceased to acquire successes of a more frivolous description. It was on this occasion that I heard him state that he had in vain declared to Voltaire that the testament of the Cardinal de Richelieu was perfectly authentic, and that the original existed in his own house: Voltaire refused to retract any of the falsehoods he had written upon this subject. I had already heard the same thing from Madame d'Egmont. I thought, on hearing this, that the marshal ought to have given a public contradiction in writing, to that historic false-

hood. But he did not wish to quarrel with Voltaire, who styled him *his hero*; and besides, like all public persons, he dreaded public ridicule, public scandal, and above all the pen of Voltaire; and thus it is that small considerations, and the dread of a coalition of encyclopedists, have a thousand times in our days, been the means of concealing multitudes of useful truths. The Marshal de Richelieu, however, had sufficient good sense and understanding to enable him to see the danger of the maxims and the doctrines of these pretended philosophers; he always expressed the same opinions in society, and there are proofs of it in several letters which he has left behind.

I passed this winter in a round of dissipation. I went seldom to the theatres, it is true, and only twice to the ball at the opera; but private balls, dinners at Madame de Puisieux's, or my aunt's, large supper parties and visits occupied a great deal of my time. Every Saturday there were suppers at the Countess de Custines, which were charming; the party was entirely composed of *women;* all our husbands having gone that day to sleep at Versailles, to be present at the king's hunting party on the following morning. We met at eight o'clock, and continued in conversation till one in the morning, with a gaiety which never relaxed. We were six in number; Mesdames de Custines and de Louvois, both charming in different ways; Madame d'Harville, equally distinguished

by her beauty, her talents, and her disposition; the Countess de Vaubecourt, who was extremely pretty, and very amusing in company, by her sallies of what seemed *naïveté*, though she was any thing but ingenuous; she was the cousin of Madame de Custines. There were, as yet, no scandalous stories published about her behaviour; her husband's gravity had hitherto preserved her reputation; but the year following, a notorious adventure obliged M. de Vaubecourt to demand a *lettre de cachet*, which he obtained; he then shut her up in a convent, where she passed the rest of her days. Our fifth lady was the Countess of Crény; she was the only one of the party who was not pretty. She was but twenty, though she looked forty; her behaviour was aways irreproachable, and her disposition excellent; but she used to divert us with relating all the declarations of love she received, especially at supper at the house of her mother, the Countess de la Tour du Pin. Madame de Custines insisted on knowing the names of these unfortunate lovers; and they always turned out either to be people whose names were utterly unknown to us, or persons of forty or fifty years of age, who must have been mortally tiresome even at thirty. As Madame de Crény told us that she perpetually found love letters in her reticule when she left it in the drawing-room during supper, Madame de Custines and I determined on writing her a most passionate letter, which

we slipped into her bag one evening. This letter was so extravagant and so pleasant, that I am sorry I have not preserved it. Madame de Crény had an elegant establishment; and though she was too fat and too tall to dance, she was excessively fond of dancing; she gave some delightful balls that winter, to all of which I was invited; I danced there several quadrilles, and invented one which made rather too great a sensation. The fashion of acting proverbs still continued; I called my quadrille *The Proverbs*, in which each couple formed a proverb, as they marched two and two before beginning the dance. Every one had selected his proverb. We had given Madame de Lauzun this one, " A good name is better than a golden girdle;" she was dressed with the greatest simplicity, and wore a grey girdle, quite plain. She danced with M. de Belzunce. The Duchess of Liancourt danced with M. de Boulainvilliers, who wore the costume of an old man; their proverb was, " The old cat gets always a young mouse." Madame de Marigni danced with M. de St. Julien, who was dressed as a negro; she passed her handkerchief from time to time over his face, as if to say, " It is difficult to wash an Ethiop white." I do not remember either the proverb or the cavalier of the Marchioness de Genlis, my sister-in-law; my partner was the Viscount de Laval, who was splendidly dressed, and covered with jewels; I was dressed as

a peasant girl; our proverb was, "Contentment is better than riches;" my air was gay and animated; the viscount's, without trying to make it so, was gloomy and melancholy. We were ten in number. I composed the air of the quadrille, which was very pretty and bounding. Gardel composed the figure of the dance, which, according to my notion, was also to represent a proverb, "Run backwards before you leap;" Gardel made out of this idea the liveliest and prettiest country dance I have ever seen. We had a great many rehearsals; and our quadrille was so much admired, that we resolved on dancing it at the ball of the Opera; but, unfortunately, this quadrille had excited a good deal of jealousy among some gentlemen of the Palais Royal, who had been unsuccessful in their endeavours to be of the set. They knew three or four days before hand of our intention to dance it at the opera-ball, which was then held in the saloon of the Palais Royal; and a *conspiracy* was formed, to prevent us from dancing it. We entered the ball-room at one in the morning, and all six were without masks. We walked round the saloon, which resounded with acclamations, repeated until the time we stood up to dance; every one moved as if to make way for us; when, just as we were leading off, a gigantic cat leaped suddenly, with a purring noise, into the midst of us. This was meant as an antagonist proverb, "Take care not to wake the

sleeping cat." A young Savoyard, wrapped in fur resembling cat-skin, played the part; our partners did not take the thing amiss at first, but pushed the cat out of the way softly enough; this encouraged the cat, who seemed resolved not to allow us to dance; upon this, our cavaliers, in spite of all our entreaties, gave the cat a great many kicks; and the spectators, who wished to see our quadrille, took our part, and the unfortunate cat was seized, and carried out of the room. This malignant joke spoiled, in my mind, all the amusement of the evening, for I feared it would have some unlucky results. Our quadrille met with unbounded success, and was ap plauded to the echo; I was charmed at this, as it restored our cavaliers to their former good humour. Three of them, Messieurs de Boulainvilliers, de Belzunce, and de St. Julien, our best dancers, were in a violent rage against the unlucky cat; it was in vain I told them that the animal had been ill enough treated to prevent it from returning, for a "scalded cat dreads even cold water;" they wished to question him about the *authors* of this malicious scheme. We dissuaded them from making these enquiries. We heard, some days afterwards, that it was a certain young prince and his friends; but as the triumph had been on our side, our cavaliers were easily calmed, and our lady dancers escaped with no other misfortune than the fright. M. de St. Julien,

who was the most annoyed about the cat, was a charming young man; it was said of him, that it seemed as if nature, in giving him a beautiful face, had done so in sport; his fine complexion was exactly like rouge, and he had on his chin two black moles, placed precisely as patches then wore on most of the women's faces; so that his pretty male face looked like a frolic of nature. He had once fought a duel about these misplaced graces; he was brave and clever, and had not the slightest touch of coxcombry about him.

I amused myself a great deal at home, also, this winter; my saloon was large, and we not only performed proverbs in it, but a comic opera, of which my friend Mademoiselle Baillon, (afterwards Madame Louis, wife of the celebrated architect,) composed the music; M. de Sauvigny wrote the opera, and introduced into it a part for me, in which I played on the harp, the guitar, and the bagpipe. We played also a pretty comedy, called *The Miser in Love*. Mademoiselle Baillon was a charming young person; she was handsome, mild, modest, prudent, and clever; she was a *pianist* of the first order; she composed music admirably, and with astonishing facility; she composed a comic opera, (*Fleur d'Epine*,) which was played with applause; it would have been still more successful if the words had been better written; but the poet had completely spoiled Count

Hamilton's charming tale. Our little performances, which took place between two screens, always terminated by a delicious concert, which was led by the famous Cramer, who passed that winter at Paris; he was the finest violin player I ever heard; Jarnovitz was the second violin; Duport played the violoncello, and Mademoiselle Baillon the piano; I sung and played on the harp; Friseri, who, though blind, played on the mandoline in an astonishing style, assisted also at these concerts, as did Albanèze, the Italian singer. Our performers in comedies and proverbs were the Count d'Albaret, Coqueley, and the President de Périgny; (the most celebrated male performers in proverbs of the day;) our women were the Marchioness of Roncé, Mademoiselle Baillon, and myself. We had for audience about fifteen people; M. de Sauvigny, the Abbé Arnaud, the author; the Chevalier de Talleyrand, brother of the Baron, a friend of M. de Genlis; the Chevalier de Barbantane; M. de Vérac, afterwards ambassador to Copenhagen; his wife, in whom I admired the union of two qualities, very rarely found together, extreme vivacity and extreme mildness: her con duct has been always admirable; she followed her husband into Denmark, where she died. The rest of our audience was composed by turns of the Count and Countess of Brancas, Madame de Custines, her husband, and her brother-in-law, &c. My aunt never

came to these little parties; however I invited her, well knowing that she would refuse the invitation; my friends were not her's; besides she had no desire to see me act proverbs, nor to hear me play on the harp. This winter M. d'Albaret proposed to me the idea of a little piece which delighted me. He used to visit Madame du Bocage, and related to us all that passed at her little suppers to the wits. M. d'Albaret had been several times at Ferney, and imitated M. de Voltaire's manner to perfection. It was agreed that we should act *the little suppers of Madame du Bocage;* and that we should suppose M. de Voltaire at Paris. M. d'Albaret took this part; M. de Genlis, the Chevalier de Barbantane, and four or five other persons, assumed the characters of other wits. I wore the costume of a woman of sixty, and from the instructions of Monsieur d'Albaret, I played with great success Madame du Bocage; I spoke of my travels in Italy; I was complimented on my Columbiad and my former beauty; then every body's attention was turned to M. de Voltaire, who performed his part with consummate skill, and without any caricature. He related anecdotes and repeated verses, among which were a great many impromptus in my praise—or rather in praise of Madame du Bocage. We had five *suppers of Madame du Bocage,* without becoming tired of the kind of pleasantry which predominated in them. M. d'Albaret was

inimitable in Voltaire. We all engaged to keep the secret of these suppers, and it was so well kept, that they were never alluded to in society. Amidst all this dissipation I still found occasion to cultivate my talents for all sorts of music, as I was continually asked to play; but besides this, I regularly read an hour a day during the time I was at my toilette, and I found means of securing as much time for making extracts. There were always at least two days in the week that we did not go out: on these days I read five or six hours, and wrote two or three; besides this, I copied the memorials which M. de Genlis was continually composing for the ministers, relative to the army or navy; and I had to write these out very neatly from dreadfully blotted copies; I never was employed in any thing more fatiguing to me. I trembled when I saw him come into my room with his huge sheets of paper in his hands; however my complaisance in this respect has not been useless to me, as it regarded my literary occupations. M. de Genlis had a great deal of talent, and wrote beautiful verses; but when he composed in prose, he was exceedingly diffuse. In reading his memorials, which were full of good ideas well expressed, I saw that they might be much abridged, and that they would be improved by being so. This was a delightful discovery for me. I suggested these abridgments to him; he rejected them at first, and ridiculed my

ideas on the subject, but I persevered. I proposed M. de Sauvigny as arbiter; who pronounced in my favour. It was necessary to alter some phrases, as is always the case when you have to abridge. I offered a little specimen of my plan, which was accepted. I had now ample authority to cut and carve; I abridged all the memorials with great care, and sometimes re-wrote them from beginning to end. I gained nothing by my new scheme but the saving of paper; but I could boast that the writing was my own, and this feeling of self-love encouraged me, and took away all sense of *ennui* from my labour; and I thus acquired a habit of arranging my ideas in a luminous manner, and of writing with precision. It was this year that I wrote my first historical novel, founded on an anecdote in the life of Tamerlane. This novel was entitled *Parisatis, or the New Medea;* it was horribly tragical, and written in a volume which contained two hundred pages of my writing. M. de Morfontaine and M. de la Reynière lent me books in the most obliging manner, and allowed me to keep them as long as I pleased. This winter I read with inexpressible delight Pascal's *Thoughts*, the *Funeral Orations* of Bossuet, and the *Sermons for Lent* of Massillon. I had already read these immortal works; but apparently my understanding was now formed; for I appeared to feel as if I read them for the first time, so strong were

the sentiments of astonishment and admiration which their perusal caused me. I read these three sublime writers in the following manner; first, the profound Pascal occupied my mind for half an hour, and fortified my faith by his admirable reasonings; then Bossuet raised me above the earth and all my own concerns; and lastly, I rested entranced in the heavens with Massillon. The majestic flow of his eloquence, and the sweetness and harmony of his language, have something about them which is truly divine. How I pity those who have no love of reading, of study, or of the fine arts! . . . I have passed my youth amidst amusements and in the most brilliant society; but I can assert with perfect truth, that I have never tasted pleasures so true as those I have found in the study of books, in writing, or in music. The days that succeed brilliant entertainments are always melancholy, but those which follow days of study are delicious; we have gained something, we have acquired some new knowledge, and we recal the past day not only without disgust and without regret, but with consummate satisfaction.

About the middle of winter I read with enthusiastic admiration the *Natural History* of M. de Buffon; the perfection of his style enchanted me, and I studied it intensely. I discovered that it was impossible to add any thing to the sentences and paragraphs of this splendid work, and that it was

equally impossible to retrench any thing from it; I thence concluded that it was written with the most luminous clearness and the most admirable precision. Massillon, who was the first to initiate me somewhat into the secrets of harmony, as well as the author of *Telemachus*, qualified me in some measure to feel the melody of that admirable prose. I endeavoured also to displace some words, and to change others, by substituting synonimes for them; but I saw that the slightest alteration marred the harmony, or injured the sense; this proved to me that no author was ever so perfectly acquainted with the value and propriety of words and expressions. From this time I discovered that the perfection of a style consists in its being natural, clear, and full of precision; in being harmonious, correct, and abounding in well chosen expressions. After a long and diligent examination of these styles, I read over again towards the end of the winter all my compositions and my historical novel; and except my *Reflections of a Mother twenty years of age*, and my comedy of *False Delicacy*, which I determined to retouch, I burned the whole; and I had good reason to do so, for the rest were extremely ill written. M. d'Albaret persuaded me to learn Italian, and sent me an old teacher called Fortunati, under whom I made great progress in a short time.

This year my aunt was seized with a fancy which

occasioned me a great deal of annoyance; she insisted on learning to play on the harp and to make verses. I gave her lessons on the instrument every day I went to dine with her; but she is a scholar who has never done me great honour. As for verse-making, her attempts at it were by no means fortunate. She was in every respect extremely ignorant. I do not think she had ever read two pages of a good book; she did not even read romances. It was she who some years after said, speaking of M. de Saint Priest, the Turkish ambassador, that he had, near Constantinople, a charming country house, on the shores of the Baltic. With this fund of erudition she began to compose verses. Her first piece of poetry was her own portrait, which was neither insipid nor flattered; there was some gaiety and even wit about the ideas, but there was not a single verse in measure, and there were several feet wanting in each line; I corrected this singular production. I was far from thinking then that my aunt, who was thirty years old, would seven or eight years after compose *tragedies;* to be sure she never would have written them, bad as they were, without the aid of M. Lefevre. The Duke of Orleans was still enamoured of her. M. de Montesson was then eighty-seven, and my aunt seriously looked forward to the high rank which she afterwards attained. There was but one obstacle in the way—and this was her *pla-*

tonic affection, which every one knew, for the Count de Guines. But ambition inspired my aunt with many marvellous inventions; I shall soon have to relate them in detail, and they will be found very curious. First, however, I shall speak of her friends. Her most intimate friend was Madame de Gourgues, wife of the president, and sister of M. de Lamoignon. This lady was always sick, and almost always reclining on a sofa, and suffering a *platonic* and unhappy passion for the Chevalier de Jaucour, who was called *Moonlight*. Madame de Gourgues was remarkably pale, and wore no rouge; her paleness suited the style of her face; her person offered several strange contrasts; she had a sentimental air, but her manners were cold; simplicity in her disposition and pedantry in her understanding; she was very religious, and had a great admiration for the encyclopedists. She was not amiable, but she had many virtues; and she was thought to have a great deal of talent and reading, because she understood English—a thing very rare at that period. We often went to sup at her house; there never was any man present but the Chevalier de Jaucour; and besides my aunt and myself, two other ladies; we were never more than six at table. Madame de Gourgues did not please me; she regarded and treated me as a child, and I kept always a profound silence in her company. My aunt was always amiable and gay at

this house, and was the charm of these little suppers; in her behaviour on these occasions there was neither any motive of interest or desire of conquest: and when ambition or interest did not oppose it, my aunt's disposition was delightful.

The Chevalier de Jaucour had an agreeable countenance, a round face, full and pale, black eyes, handsome features, and brown hair, which he wore in disorder, and without powder; he really deserved his *sobriquet* of Moonlight. His shape was noble, and he had a good air; his disposition was excellent, full of sincerity and honour. He had served in several campaigns; he entered the army at the age of twelve, and had shown as much military knowledge as courage. His understanding was like his disposition, solid and reasonable. At one of these suppers my aunt happened to say that I was afraid of ghosts. Upon this Madame de Gourgues begged the Chevalier de Jaucour to relate his *grand story about the tapestry*. I had always heard of this adventure as being perfectly true, for the Chevalier de Jaucour gave his word of honour that he added nothing to the story, and he was incapable of telling a lie, in which, besides, in such a case there would have been no pleasantry. The adventure became prophetic at the period of the revolution. I can repeat it with scrupulous fidelity, because, knowing the Chevalier

de Jaucour intimately, I have heard him relate it five or six times in my presence.

The chevalier, who was born in Burgundy, was educated at the college of Autun. He was twelve years of age when his father, who wished to send him to the army under the care of one of his uncles, brought him to his château. The same evening, after supper, he was conducted to a large room, where he was to sleep; on a stool in the middle of the room was placed a lighted lamp, and he was left alone. He undressed himself, and went immediately into bed, leaving the lamp burning. He had no inclination to sleep, and as he had scarcely looked at his room on entering it, he now amused himself with examining it. His eyes were attracted by an old curtain of tapestry wrought with figures, which hung opposite to him; the subject was somewhat singular; it represented a temple, of which all the gates were closed. At the top of the staircase belonging to the edifice stood a kind of pontiff or high-priest, clothed in a long white robe, holding in one hand a bundle of rods, and in the other a key. Suddenly the chevalier, who gazed earnestly on the figure, began to rub his eyes, which, he thought, deceived him; then he looked again, and his surprise and wonder rendered him motionless! . . . . He saw the figure move, and slowly descend the steps of the staircase! . . . .

At last it quitted the tapestry, and walked into the room, crossed the chamber, and stood near the bed; and addressing the poor boy, who was petrified with fear, it pronounced distinctly these words: "These rods will scourge many—when thou shalt see them raised on high, then stay not, but seize the key of the open country, and flee!" On pronouncing these words, the figure turned round, walked up to the tapestry, remounted the steps, and replaced itself in its former position. The chevalier, who was covered with a cold sweat, remained for more than a quarter of an hour so bereft of strength, that he had not the power to call for assistance; at last some one came; but not wishing to confide his adventure to a servant, he merely said that he felt unwell, and a person was set to watch by his bedside during the remainder of the night. The following day, the Count de Jaucour, his father, having questioned him on his pretended malady of the preceding night, the young man related what he had seen. In place of laughing at him, as the chevalier expected, the count listened very attentively, and then said: "This is very remarkable; for my father, in his early youth, in this very chamber, and with the same personage represented in that tapestry, met with a very singular adventure." . . . . . . The chevalier would very gladly have heard the detail of his grandfather's vision, but the count refused to say any more upon the subject,

and even desired his son never to mention it again; and the same day the count caused the tapestry to be pulled down and burnt in his presence in the castle court-yard.

Such is the detail of this story in all its simplicity. Mrs. Radcliffe would have been glad to have heard it; and I dare say the Chevalier de Jaucour thought of it at the time of the revolution; for the fact is, that when he saw the *rods raised, he seized the key of the open country, and fled.* He quitted France.

To return to my aunt's society. Her best friend, next to Madame de Gourgues, was the Duchess of Chaulnes, daughter of the Duke of Chevreuse. She was handsome, but totally destitute of talent and feeling, and she had a thousand ridiculous affectations. She is the only woman whom I have ever known, who could be justly charged with the fault of certain persons of the other sex—*coxcombry.* There was coxcombry in her air, in her manners, in her tone, and in all her conversation. Her conduct, however, was irreproachable; she had been married when very young to a sort of fool, who, the very day after his marriage, set off suddenly for Egypt. He remained there several years, and on his return refused to see his wife. Another of my aunt's friends was the dowager Princess of Chimay, a very insignificant personage, who had neither the merit nor the beauty of the other Princess of Chimay, so very interesting by her be-

haviour, her piety, and her virtues, and who has been already mentioned as maid of honour to the queen. The rest of my aunt's acquaintances were Madame de la Massais, who has been already spoken of, and the Marchioness of Livri. The latter was young, good tempered, and whimsical; she was so gay, and so frank, that she continually forgot all the usages of society; she was thirty-four or thirty-five years of age. The women of that time of life then wore, instead of shoes, what were called *mules*, which were a kind of shoes without quarters, only covering the point of the foot, and standing upon high heels, which we all wore at that period. I could never conceive how any body could walk in these little slippers. One evening at Madame de Livri's, where I was supping with my aunt for the first time, and in a large party, Madame de Livri had a dispute with the Marquis of Hautefeuille, who was at the other end of the room; she got warmer by degrees, and at last grew so angry, that she suddenly drew off one of her slippers, and threw it at his head. It was really a shoe for Cinderella, for she had the prettiest little foot in the world. I never was more surprised in my life; yet this piece of thoughtlessness brought about a warm friendship between us. I have seen her do a thousand foolish things of the same description, which were all charming in her, because they were always perfectly natural; and yet this very woman, so indifferent about

what she said or did in her private circle, was unlike all others, and was remarkable for her prudence and her propriety in all important matters, as she was for the want of these qualities in small things. She kept an excellent house, and gave delightful suppers, but she went out but rarely, and scarcely ever to parties, though she received a great deal of company at her own house.

The gentlemen my aunt saw most frequently were the Count de Chabot, who has been mentioned before; the Chevalier de Coigny, who was nicknamed *Mimi*, (Puss,) I could never discover for what reason; he was much in fashion, and had a handsome face; he was thought to be witty; I have often seen him, but I have never heard him converse; but at each visit he made any where, he left behind him some witticism, good or bad, as it might happen, which was always quoted; when his joke was said, he spoke no more; he had an absent and indifferent air, and was, at the same time, extremely hare-brained and wild. I thought I discovered in him a great deal of coxcombry, a false and affected gaiety, and an air of irony, which he never left off, even when he was desirous of pleasing. The Duke of Coigny, his elder brother, was mild, amiable, and polite, and his excellent disposition made him generally beloved and esteemed. The Marquis of Lusignan, who was called *Thickhead*, another acquaintance of my aunt's, was the confident of all the

women; the only requisites for this office were good nature and discretion, and pretending to believe that all the intrigues were only *platonic affections*. Many gentlemen of this period, who were deficient in the requisite talents of success with women, took the modest office of confident, which gave them in society a certain air of importance, which has sometimes turned out to be useful to several of them. The Marquis of Estréhan, who was now an old man, was then the supreme confident of the ladies. He had acquired this confidence as a sort of right, and to fail in it would have been an impolite proceeding in his eyes. His advices on this subject were (it was said) excellent; he was the *director* of all the ladies who had lovers. M. Donézan, brother of the Marquis of Husson, was a perfectly amiable person, and the only good narrator of a story whom I have ever known; he was always amusing; M. de Pont, superintendant of Moulins, also a very amiable man, who, a few years after, married a charming young woman, mother of the present Madame de Fontanges; the Marquis of Clermont, since ambassador to Spain and Naples, celebrated for his wit, his amiable disposition, and his numerous accomplishments; and the Count d'Albaret; these were the persons who composed her intimate acquaintance. She received, however, many others; but these were only simple visitors. I have several times seen at her house M. and Madame de Boulain-

villiers, the Count de la Marche, afterwards Prince of Conti, who died in Spain ; he was blunt, but obliging ; he was at once odd and insipid—a character of which he is the only example that I have ever seen. From time to time I went, as I have said, to dine or sup with my grandmother, who behaved still with the same coldness to me. One day, when we arrived too early for dinner, we found nobody in the room but her sister, Mademoiselle Dessaleux, my grand-aunt, who was an excellent person. My grandmother was from home, and was not to return till the hour of dinner. Mademoiselle Dessaleux proposed showing me my grandmother's private cabinet, which was full of fine pictures and engravings ; first, I looked at an enormous picture representing my grandmother in her youth, and her son, then an infant, who was afterwards killed at Minden ; Madame de la Haie had been much celebrated for her beauty, but I was struck only with the affectation of the portrait ; my grandmother was represented as Venus, and her son as Cupid. I looked longer at a charming little picture exquisitely painted, the subject of which was Europa ; and I remarked in it a pretty idea ; the bull, who is carrying her off, turns round his head, as if to kiss the pretty little naked foot of Europa. I said, I thought Europa handsome but too fat ; Mademoiselle Dessaleux smiled, and said, that it was not an historical picture, but a portrait of Madame de Berry, daughter

of the regent; she further told me that the princess, during her amour with the late Marquis de la Haie, the husband of my grandmother, had caused this portrait to be painted for him, and had herself presented it to him. I thought in my own mind that if M. de la Haie's mistress had been only a private individual, my austere grandmother would have thought this picture disgraceful, and would certainly not have kept it so preciously in her cabinet; such a false colour vanity can give to objects! . . . Madame de Montesson, after the death of my grandmother, became the proprietor of this picture, and presented it to the Duke of Orleans, who placed it in his apartments, where it remained till the revolution; I do not know what became of it afterwards.

I did not go this year* to Sillery, because I was with child; but I went with my aunt to the Isle-Adam, where I acted notwithstanding my pregnancy. My aunt performed in an opera, of which the music was by Monsigny; this opera has neither been played nor printed; afterwards Monsigny burnt it. The opera was called *Baucis and Philemon*, and the music was charming. My aunt was Baucis, and was dressed as an old woman through the two first acts; the part suited her voice, she had studied it well, and the costume of the old woman made her look quite

* 1767.

young; she appeared not more than twenty; she met with great applause in the part, and deserved it.

While on this subject, I shall relate a little incident, which seems to me curious, as it shows to what lengths self-love, even in the most positive matters, may deceive us. At the first representation of the opera, my aunt retired, after the two first acts, to dress as a young shepherdess, and I followed her into a room near the stage, where she was to change her costume. She was not deformed, but she had one shoulder much larger than the other, which rendered her back very ill-shaped, when she wore nothing to conceal or disguise the defect, and her shepherdess's boddice left it entirely exposed. I told her of this, but her waiting-maid, through a habit of flattery, assured her that her dress became her *to perfection.* As my aunt appeared to believe this, I placed another mirror behind her, and let her see in the looking-glass her own back, which looked quite ridiculous; she examined it, and to my great surprise, was quite of the opinion of Mademoiselle Legrand, her waiting-woman. She played in this dress, which every one thought very strange. After the play, Madame de Boufflers, who was always very attentive to me, took me aside to scold me for not having told my aunt of the bad shape of her back; I justified myself, by saying, that the opinion of her maid had prevailed

over mine; but I concealed the circumstance of the mirror, because that would have made my aunt appear truly ridiculous. This opera was performed three times. We acted proverbs, I played a great deal, and often played to dancing parties; our excursion was very brilliant. The Princess of Beauvau and Madame de Poix passed several days here. The former, the sister of Messieurs de Chabot and de Jarnac, was then, I think, thirty-five or thirty-six years of age, and in my opinion he was the most elegant person in society, in point of talent, fashion, manners, and the tone of frankness and openness, which was peculiar to herself. Her politeness was at once obliging and noble; her superiority was at once evident, but none ever found it embarrassing. In her whole conduct, there was a communicative easiness of manner; and I have often felt, after having passed half an hour in her company, that I had lost the half of my natural reserve. She had married M. de Beauvau for love; and I have never known in society a husband and wife more remarkable for an example of conjugal affection, more perfect or in better taste. The Princess of Poix was only the daughter of the Prince of Beauvau, but her step-mother, in point of affection, was a real mother to her. I have never seen any cruel step-mothers among persons belonging to the court; they were only to be found in the middling and lower classes.

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The revolution may have introduced some of these into the higher ranks, but the feeling which inspires these cruel persons is so ignoble that it cannot last long.

Madame de Poix was charming; there was no defect in her shape, but she was not handsome; and she walked lame. She had a beautiful face and complexion. She was gay, frank, witty, and piquant. All these advantages, which are in general so dangerous to women, have only served to add their charm to the life of Madame de Poix, whose reputation has been always spotless. At the Isle-Adam I also saw the Princess of Hénin, whom I had already met in society; she was young, and had a charming face; but her beauty did not last long; the following winter her complexion was spoiled, and she looked no longer pretty. She had in her person and manner something that seemed *too much formed* for a young person of eighteen; she was said to possess wit, and her reputation in that way is now well established. I have never been able to judge of this, though I knew her for twelve years; she was of that number of persons, then pretty numerous, who never speak aloud in company, and only with their friends at table, where they always place themselves near each other; or, when not at table, in the recesses of windows; persuading themselves that they can never be appreciated out of the circle of their intimate acquaintance.

Thus their wit remains buried *in the breast of friendship*, and is, for the rest of the world, only a tradition.

We found still resident at the Isle-Adam the Maréchale de Luxembourg and Madame de Lauzun. I was never tired of contemplating the latter, who had the most interesting face, and the noblest and sweetest air I have ever seen; she was extremely reserved, without being insipid; she was uniformly obliging and good tempered, without being tiresome; and in her whole manner there was a piquant and original mixture of wit and ingenuousness. The maréchale, as I have already stated, was the oracle of fashion. Her decisions on every thing in high life were without appeal. She had made, on such matters, reflexions at once wity and ingenious, but from which she often generalized very improperly. Here is a droll instance of this. One morning (it was on a Sunday) we waited only for the Prince of Conti's arrival to celebrate mass; we were all seated about a round table in the drawing-room, on which lay our prayer-books, which the maréchale amused herself by turning over. All at once she stopped at two or three prayers, which seemed to her to be *in the worst taste*, and of which, in fact, the expressions were somewhat singular. She made some very bitter remarks on these prayers; upon which I suggested to her, that it was enough if they were repeated with sincere piety,

and that God certainly paid no attention to what we call *good* or *bad taste*. "Oh Madam," cried the maréchale very gravely, "don't take such a notion as that into your head!" . . . . A general burst of laughter interrupted her speech. She was not displeased; but she was still persuaded that the supreme judge of all that is good, disdains not to judge also of our habits and our manners; and that, even in deeds, which are equally meritorious, he always prefers those which are performed with the most grace and elegance.

On this occasion, the Count de Guines made no secret whatever of his *sentiments* (as the phrase then was) for the Countess Amelia; and my aunt had frequent attacks of cholic, but they never came on till she retired to rest, which deprived her of none of the pleasures of society. As, before quitting the drawing-room, she complained of this in a whisper to her friends, and especially to the Duke of Orleans, we accompanied her to her room. There she laid herself down in bed, and groaned for exactly three quarters of an hour, neither more nor less. During this time Madame de Choisi, one of her friends and I were employed in heating cloths in an adjoining room; the Duke of Orleans, with tears in his eyes, remained beside her. The Count de Guines was sent out of the room in the course of ten minutes. At last I discovered the plot of this farce; my aunt

was sick from the infidelity of the Count de Guines. She *frankly* laid open all her sensibility to the Duke of Orleans, and at the same time allowed him to hope that the extraordinary conduct of the Count de Guines would cure her of a passion which was as unfortunate as it was pure. Every thing succeeded to her wish. The Duke of Orleans, in spite of the interests of his passion, was so touched with her *sufferings* and her *sentiments*, that he conceived a strong dislike to the Count de Guines. It was very amusing to see the looks of indignation with which he regarded the count, when he returned with my aunt and us into her room, and when the count followed the countess's steps every where about the drawing-room, and seemed to be overwhelmed with love for her. On these occasions I saw the Duke of Orleans shrug his shoulders several times, and seem ready to break out. I have never been able rightly to discover whether the spectators were the dupes of this plot, which appeared to me somewhat coarse; I remarked that several of the men occasionally smiled, but all the women seemed to pity the *victim of inconstancy*. The behaviour of my aunt amidst all this was, to my eyes, the most comical thing possible, especially on the day following her attack of cholic. The melancholy and mysterious airs of the ladies who enquired about her health, the half-suppressed sighs of my aunt, and her languishing airs, are things

which it is impossible to describe. I shall soon mention the private views which induced the Count de Guines to second so well the interests of my aunt. It will be seen that he had a real motive in doing so. Madame de Montesson made me no positive disclosures, but she often gave me vague hints that she was suffering from an unhappy passion; I never questioned her on the subject, and things rested thus till the end of our excursion.

From the Isle-Adam I went to Balincour, where I passed three months in the most quiet and agreeable manner; there was scarcely ever any one but the family, for we saw very little company. M. and Madame de Balincour kept a large establishment at Paris, but at their country-house they received only their intimate friends. The Countess of Balincour had talents, an amiable disposition, and an excellent heart. She has always been one of the friends in whose society I have taken the most pleasure. Though naturally of a serious disposition, and forty years of age, she seemed to me still young, because she was neither pedantic nor sermonizing. M. de Balincour, at the age of forty-two, was of so riotous a gaiety, that it was impossible to discover through his frolics, his tricks and his playfulness, whether or not he was a person of talent. But there was in his whole behaviour something so original and natural that he was quite amusing. He never behaved in a reason-

able manner, except with the Maréchale de Balincour, his uncle and his benefactor. Never was an old man so happy as the maréchal, or deserved more to be so, for his piety, his goodness, and his mildness. I have spoken of him at length in my *Souvenirs*.* He had still preserved his memory completely, he was not deaf, he read frequently without spectacles, and had his teeth till the age of eighty, at which period I saw him. The old curate of Balincour used sometimes to come to dine at the château; he was a saint in his behaviour, but of a simplicity which it was wonderful to meet with nine leagues from Paris. The first day after my arrival, he attached himself to me in a manner that surprised me; he followed me everywhere—in the drawing-room, in our walks, and in my room; and his theme was always the truth of the Apostolic Roman religion, of which he recapitulated all the proofs. He ended by fatiguing me. This plot lasted a fortnight; it was a frolic of M. de Balincour's, who made the worthy curate believe that I was a Lutheran, (though I concealed the fact,) and that he had charged him with my conversion. M. de Genlis was with his regiment; on arriving at Paris, I found a note from my aunt, informing me that she was ill and confined to bed; I had left her at the Isle-Adam, from whence she was to have gone

* See the *Souvenirs de Felicie*.

two days after to Paris; and where, in fact, she went and passed a week; she then went to Villers-Coterets, where she remained for six weeks, and then returned to the Isle-Adam with the Duke of Orleans. She found the Count de Guines there, and the scenes which I have related above re-commenced. I supposed the malady of Madame de Montesson was sentimental, and I did not disquiet myself much about it. The following morning I called upon her, and found her alone and in bed; she told me at once, placing my hand on her heart, that *her disease was there*, and that it would cause her death; I gave her some common-place topics of consolation. She then showed me a letter from the Count de Guines, who, at the same time that he made a long eulogy of her virtues, and the strongest protestations of esteem, admiration, and attachment, declared that he no longer felt any love for her, and that he was enamoured of another. My aunt added, that he had not concealed from the Duke of Orleans either the letter or her own grief on the occasion; (this I easily believed;) that the Duke of Orleans *had conducted himself admirably towards her*, and that by his behaviour towards her on this occasion, he had acquired a right to her affections. I still continued to repeat the same common-places—that I hoped she would recover all this, &c. She said, that if it had not been for the abominable conduct of the Count de Guines, she would have carried her fatal

passion to the grave; but that she still had need of a long separation from the count, and that she had stated this to the Duke of Orleans, entreating him to obtain for the count the embassy to Prussia. I now comprehended why the count had lent himself to her plots; he had very little love, and a great deal of ambition, and had long ardently desired an embassy; without this farce he might have waited a long time; but it was very certain that the duke would now solicit the favour with so much earnestness, that he could not fail to obtain it. I kept up my part, an ignorant spectator of the comedy, saying only to my aunt, that I feared the new passion of the count might hinder him from accepting the embassy. She replied to this, that, in fact, the count left France with regret, but that the Duke of Orleans had spoken to him *so decidedly* on the subject, that he had been compelled to comply. He obtained the embassy, and quitted France two months after.

In order to finish here all that relates to the count, I shall relate an anecdote, which is perfectly characteristic of his cunning. On his arrival at Berlin he was very unfavourably received by the King of Prussia. This prince played on the flute, and was passionately fond of music; the great abilities of the count on this instrument persuaded him, that the court of France had sent him such an ambassador

for no other reason. This idea displeased the king; and, in the great Frederick, it showed a littleness of mind. The count, seeing that the king continued to treat him with a coolness which was almost insulting, discovered the motive, but feigned to be ignorant of it. He sometimes met a person, who was said to be one of the king's private spies, and one day, in presence of this person, he said, in a tone of the greatest levity and carelessness, that he had now discovered the reason why the king never invited him to his intimate society, at the same time adding, "The king has correspondents at Paris, who must have informed him that I am of a mocking and epigrammatic turn." Some one remarking, "how unjustly any one had given him that character to the king"—"No," said the count, coolly, "some one may easily have given me that character, without meaning any harm; at Paris, this kind of wit is but the habitual tone of society; *we do not fear it there.*"

This conversation, as the count anticipated, was reported to the king, who at first said, that he was neither afraid of ridicule nor epigrams. He thenceforth treated the Count de Guines very well; invited him to his parties, conversed with him, was charmed with his talents and manners, often played duos on the flute with him, and constantly after showed him marks of the highest favour.

Three weeks after my aunt's confidence, I was

delivered of my son; I was then twenty-two; M. de Genlis returned from his regiment two days before my confinement. I recovered, at least I went to church, in a fortnight. My health was never better at any period.

I had read a great deal at Balincour, and had written a prodigious number of notes and extracts; as I had, besides this, a great number of correspondents, I composed nothing. The succeeding winter passed away like the preceding. I wrote, in imitation of Fontenelle, *Dialogues of the Dead*, but they were more moral; the first, was between Constantine the Great and Charlemagne; the second, between Elizabeth Queen of England and Christina of Sweden; the third, between Louis XI. and Henry IV. The Abbé Delille visited me several times this winter; he recited some beautiful verses, and certainly no one could recite them better than he. This year M. de St. Lambert published his poem, *The Seasons;* M. and Madame de Beauvau esteemed the author, and were his warm protectors; they were seconded by all their own coterie, and the work met with a most favourable reception from the public; but the best judges, though they agreed that the language of the poem was elegant, thought it dull, destitute of imagination, and very tiresome. There is, from the beginning to the end of this work, a sombre and monotonous colouring, which renders the reading of it

extremely fatiguing; you feel that the author has purposely adopted this tone of colouring, that he has wished to be thought a *thinker*, and that he has mistaken dullness for depth. It is this poem which first introduced into France the *philosophic*, *romantic*, and *German* affectations of melancholy; and besides this, the taste for *description*, to which personages, passions, sentiments, and virtues are made merely accessory: while forests, plants, rocks, caverns, waters, precipices, and ruins, are made the materials of the subject. It was otherwise once, but "*nous avons changé tout cela*." This alteration is the natural consequence of materialism; in withering the heart, it has withered along with it our imagination and our literature. In spite of all its defects, however, the *Seasons* is a poem which will always hold an honourable place in French libraries, because its language is elegant, and this is a merit which of itself is sufficient to ensure the existence of a work. Like every other person, I read the poem, and I thought then of it as I now write. Another author of the same period excited equal enthusiasm in another department: this was Thomas, and I shared the general admiration, though my opinion has been very considerably changed since. His orations are distinguished by their false emphasis, their florid style, and their forced ideas; but there occurs frequently in them at the same time a true elevation of style and loftiness

of thought, and at that time I saw nothing but these qualities. M. de Sauvigny, by means of his arguments against the style of Thomas, enabled me to discover all his defects. It is singular, that with my feeling for nature, I should have been always a great admirer of Marivaux, in spite of his artificial manner, and of Thomas, in spite of his emphasis; but this must have arisen from my persuasion that their style was not affected, and that their manner of writing was natural to them. Their defects are exaggerated excellencies. Thomas saw things in too grand a light; and Marivaux carried his niceties and his delicacies too far. Nothing should be caricatured in writing; this is the true criterion of taste; and without taste there can be no perfection in literature or in the arts. There are two authors, St. Lambert and before him Fontenelle, who have done much injury to literature; in favour of their talents, we may excuse their *own* defects, but how shall we pardon them for having raised so many bad imitators of them? A pedantic tone, an affected emphasis, and a false brilliancy, disgrace all the works which have been published since that time to this. Rousseau himself was not exempt from these defects; but in him they were only deviations from good taste; they do not characterize his general style of writing, which is beautiful, because it is frank, harmonious, and natural. As a writer, however, he is still inferior to

M. de Buffon and our other great prose writers; for besides his affected and emphatic passages, there are in his works many detestable modes of expression, and many faults of language.

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